WHITE DWARF

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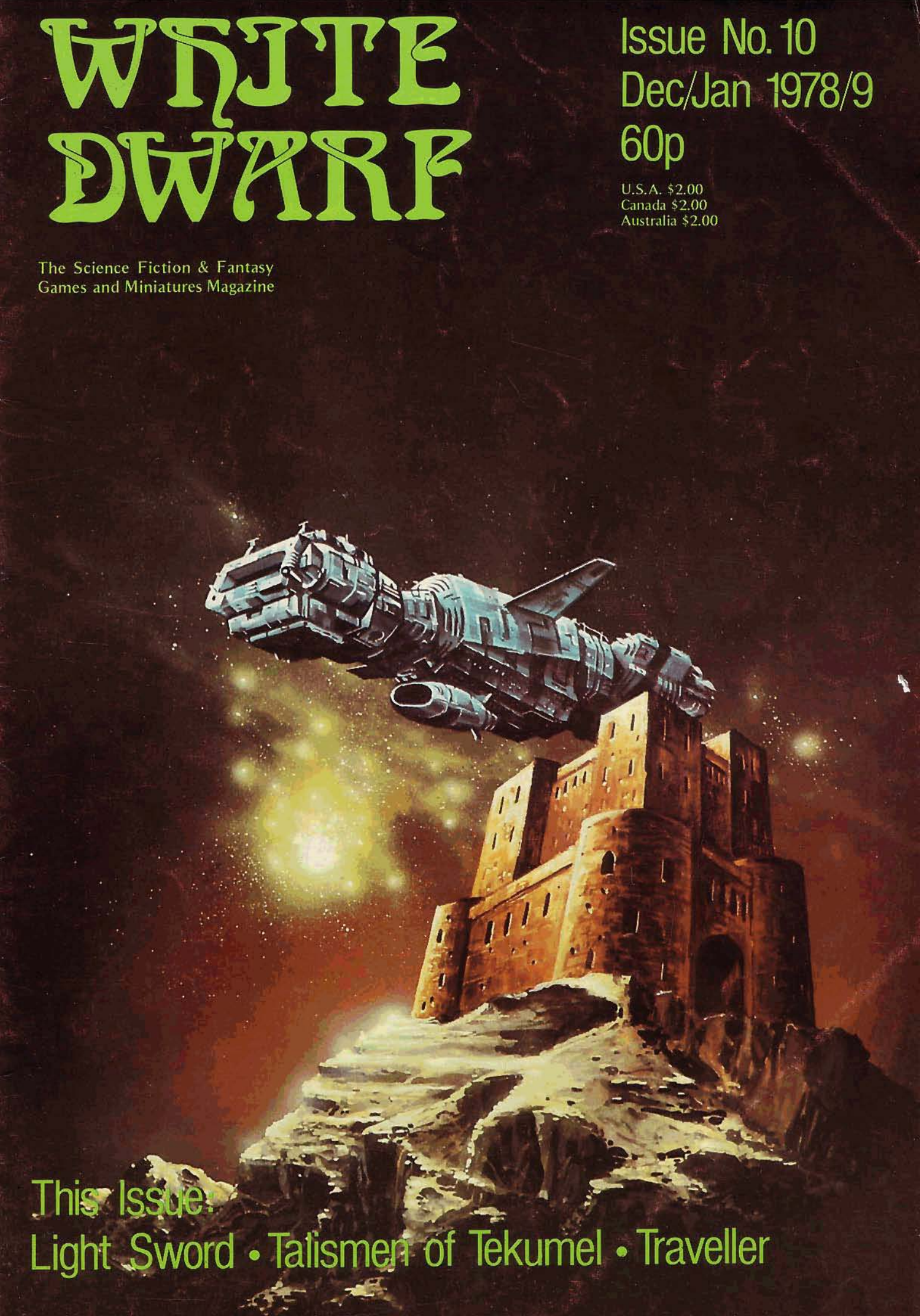

This Issue:
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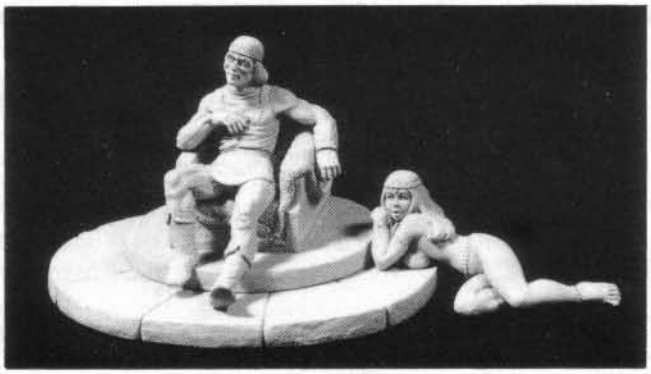

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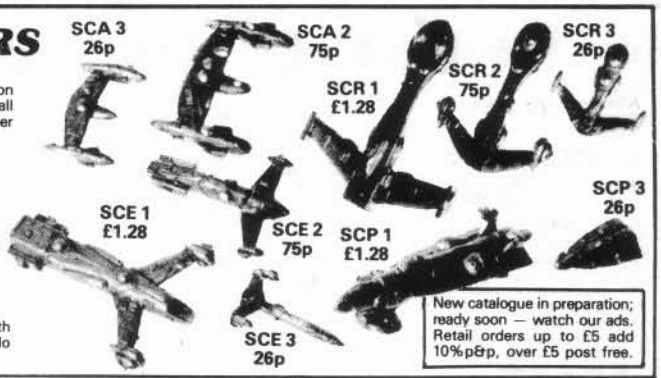

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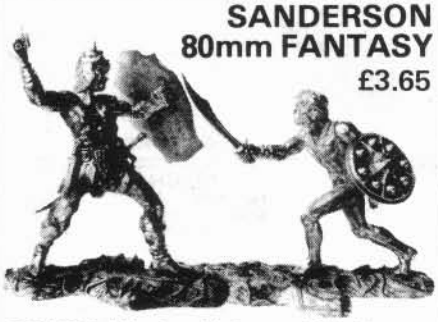

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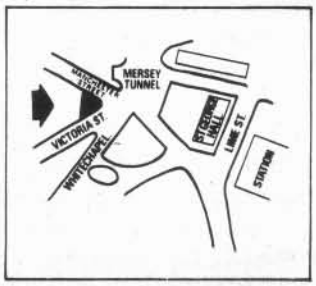

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WHITE DWARF

With the flattering news from Scott Bizar of Fantasy Games Unlimited that *Games Day IV,* with an attendance of 2,500 ranked No. 2 in the world after *Origins* (see Games Day report on page 13), British gamers should feel proud of themselves to have put their hobby in such an eminent position. We would like to thank all the *White Dwarf* readers who attended, and look forward to seeing those who didn't next year.

Many readers, after having consumed the *Advanced D&D Players' Handbook* so eagerly, are enquiring as to the release date of the *Referee's Guide.* We have recently been informed by Gary Gygax that the publication date will be well into 1979 and maybe as far back as August. However, Gary has promised to send us the Combat Table from the *Referee's Guide* for publication in *White Dwarf* if completed far enough in advance of the other material to be included in the manuscript.

Last issue we published our first mini dungeon, *The Lichway*. Many readers wrote in to ask the name of the designer. We are pleased to say that *The Lichway* was the creation of Albie Fiore a full-time member of the *White Dwarf* staff. Watch out for Albie's next creation coming soon . . . . .

Finally, we regret that we have had to raise the price of *White Dwarf* across the Atlantic. This is due to the continuing fall of the dollar together with a rise in shipping costs.

Ian Livingstone

CONTENTS page

TALISMANS OF TEKUMEL 6
Magical items for EPT designed and illustrated by Jack McArdle

NEWS 7
What's happening in the SF/F games world

THE FIEND FACTORY 8
An assortment of readers monsters edited by Don Turnbull

TREASURE CHEST 10
A miscellany of D&D additions

LETTERS 12
Readers' views and comments

GAMES DAY IV 13
A report by Ian Livingstone

LIGHT SWORD 14
An SF duelling game designed by Wilf Backhaus

OPEN BOX 16
SF/F games review

THE EXPERIENCED TRAVELLER 18
Part two of incorporation of experience into Traveller by Mike Ferguson

VALLEY OF THE FOUR WINDS 20
Chapter Three: In Greengorm Forest

MOLTEN MAGIC 22
SF/F miniature figures review

HELP! 23

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New magical items invented and illustrated by **Jack McArdle**

TALISMANS OF TEKUMEL

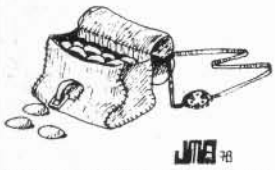
THE DAZZLING ARMLET OF OBEDIENCE

If a character can get this armlet onto the arm of another person, he may then give that person up to three orders at a time, one of which is usually not to take the armlet off. He can change the orders as he wishes as long as there are never more than three at once. If the wearer chooses to disobey, he is immediately disintegrated into a cloud of hydrogen ions with no chance of revivification. This threat is strong enough to stop even the bravest warriors, so many wily people have made fakes with which they order their victims about. Owing to this number of fakes, there is only a 10% chance that any Armlet will actually disintegrate a disobedient wearer.

The Armlet was designed for the biceps of a warrior so will not fit anyone of below average strength, nor most women.

There are thought to be about five genuine Armlets with between 40 to 50 fakes.

THE CAPSULES OF DISPELLING MAGIC



This is a leather pouch holding 1–100 glass capsules containing dispel magic spells. These capsules can be thrown 100 feet or slung (in a sling) 300 feet. On contact they shatter covering a volume 10x10x10 cubic feet dispelling any magic in the volume for two turns. There is also a 50 per cent chance of the bag containing 1–10 capsules holding other spells, the spell names written on the capsules in some ancient language.

There are a number of these pouches but the number is obviously on the decrease as people use them up.

THE STEEL SASH OF STRENGTH

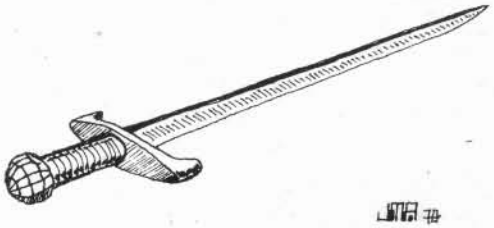
This belt is magically endowed with the power to banish any fear or panic from the mind of the wearer, thus enabling him to think clearly and calmly. It protects him from anything which would cause fear or panic or which relies on psychosomatic destruction, such as illusions or apparitions, or which seeks to confuse or force him into actions against his will, like madness or hypnosis.

The wearer would also add +2 to hitting chances and +1 to saving throws.

The only problem with the belt is that, since the wearer is totally fearless, if he happens to be of low intelligence, he may well do something dumb.

Most scholars believe there are but two or three of these belts.

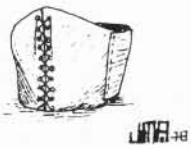
THE MAGIC-CLEAVING BLADE OF TERR'WOBEE



This sword was made a long time ago by the warrior, Terr'wobee, who had an insane hatred of magicians and magic. The holder of the sword is able to "see" any magic which is in sight and strike out at it, treating it as AC9 and destroying the magic if he hits. Thus magical armour would lose its magical enchantment, a revivified person would drop dead, a "controlled" door would open, magic gas would disappear, etc. The power of "Eyes" and similar technological devises are regarded as magical by this sword. Another ability of the sword is to hack spells in mid-air. If any spells are fired at the user, before it hits him he has a chance to chop it apart. He treats it as AC9 and if he hits the spell it is destroyed. But the user can only attack one spell per combat round. The sword has an intelligence and ego of 51, hates magic users of any alignment and is aligned towards warriors, attacking any other profession who would dare to pick it up, it does not receive any bonuses towards hitting but treats anyone who knows a spell as AC9 and does triple the normal damage. When the user of this sword attacks someone wearing magic armour, he must state whether he is attacking the person or the armour. If he attacks the person, treat it as an ordinary attack, but if he attacks the armour, it is treated as AC9, etc. He could also attack a magical sword, shield or any other item of a magical nature in his victim's possession. The sword itself happens to function by magic but Terr'wobee thought this was a small price to pay for the deeds it could do.

There is only one of these swords.

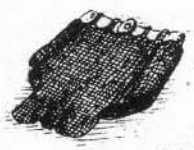
THE GIRDLE OF ABSTINENCE



Created by an ancient sect of monks who abhorred the destruction of any life, it simply enables a person to survive without the use of any food or drink for an infinite period and, due to this power of letting the body function without outside help, it enables a person to also function without oxygen and provides immunity to poisons. Since the monks were all rather emaciated, the girdle will not fit anyone with both strength and constitution over 75 or either characteristic over 90.

At the height of its development, the monastery had about 30 members, so there should be about 30 of these girdles in existence.

THE KILT OF THE FLAMING LORD



A rich northern noble with an allergy to animal skins and pyromaniac tendencies had this magical kilt made from steel mesh. It does away with the need for other clothing since it keeps the wearer and his possessions warm in the cold, cool in the hot, and dry in the wet. These protective spells are so powerful that they protect the user from fire, cold spells, acid or any other fluid or temperature weapons.

The lord only had one of these kilts made.

THE POTENT PAMPOOTIES OF PREHISTORY

A long, long time ago someone killed the last cow and made these boots from the creature's skin. In their wrath, the gods cursed the boots. But many millenia later, an eminent wizard went to work and, after much energy and time, succeeded in making them slightly safer. At least, he managed to change it so that anyone wearing the boots is immune to their curse.

These pampooties look like an ordinary pair of boots but if anyone enters within ten feet they will soon smell the difference. The odour is so powerful that in order to enter or stay in the ten foot radius sphere requires a saving throw of 4%, increased by 1% for each 5% Psychic Ability. Automatons and undead are immune but other animals or monsters require a throw of 10%. Most animals will run after one unsuccessful attempt but extremely savage beasts, like the Feshenga, will keep trying until they get through or the wearer gets away.

The saving throw must be made each combat round in order to stay in the area and, even if it is made, the hitting possibilities of the man or beast are affected by the fact that he has an extra 50% chance of missing. If the character fails the saving throw but cannot get out of the area for some reason he then has a 75% chance of missing. These chances of missing throws are made after the character has managed to hit using normal procedures.

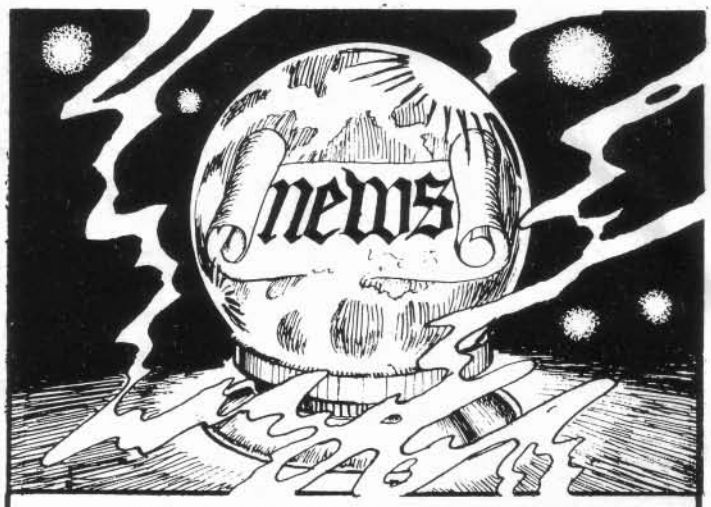
If anyone wears the boots for more than an hour, once he has taken them off the smell will still linger, disappearing at the rate of +4% to saving throws per hour. When putting the boots on again, he must make 2 saving throws in a row in order to get into the area and put them on.

Only one such pair of boots were made from the cow.

THE RAGING GAUNTLET OF THE JEWELLERS OF SHAM'ASH

This right-hand glove has various abilities and to create them uses gems as fuel. It can hold twelve gems and, at the expense of these, can do HD drains. The first HD costs 10,000K and each one after that 1000. Each ten foot range costs 10,000K and to get through any magical shield costs a further 10,000. Also the glove can increase the strength, dexterity or constitution of the user, each 10K raising the required characteristic by 1 for 10 combat rounds. A gem can only be used once, after which it is reduced to worthless stone, no matter how much of its value was actually used. Thus draining a 1HD creature using a 100,000K gem would reduce the jewel to stone even though only 10,000K was actually used. Everytime a gem is used, there is a 2% chance that it is faulty, resulting in the destruction of the glove and the user's hand. This chance is reduced to 1% if a jeweller/goldsmith has checked the gem beforehand. When found the glove will have from 1 to 12 still functioning gems. Check normally for value, putting them all up one bracket. Any gems taken off the glove instantly lose half their value.

There are believed to be at least four of these weapons.



. . . the UK soft cover printing of **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Players Handbook** and **Monster Manual** are now available . . .

. . . available soon from *TSR* will be **Divine Right** a multi-player fantasy board game of powerful monarchs which incorporates elements of fantasy, diplomacy, role-playing and combat. **Snit's Revenge**, which first appeared in *The Dragon*, will be appearing in boxed form. There will also be another dungeon module, **Tomb of Horrors** . . .

. . . to be released within the next month or so by *The Chaosium* will be **Stomp!**, a tiny game consisting of giant's feet and assorted horrified elves, and two books, **The Hero Wars** which deals with the armies and enemies of *Dragon Pass* and **The King Arthur's Sourcebook. Runequest** fans will be pleased to learn that the first scenario pack **Balastor's Barracks** has been released. It is based on the ruined city of Pavis on the Plains of Prax and can be played solo or with a referee. There is also **Trolls and Trollkin** which is the first of the Runequest source packs . . .

. . . the first SF game to be released in Holland has now reached the UK with rules written in English. Entitled **Metropolis** and published by *RAJ Publications*, the game is for two players and is a battle between robots on land and sea . . .

. . . after much doubt concerning UK copyright, the long-awaited **Middle Earth** trilogy has been released by *SPUK* . . . . .projected for release in 1979 by *Fantasy Games Unlimited* are two boxed games. Both employ role-playing and the two themes are based on Chicago gangsters and pirates . . .

. . . work is now in progress to bring out two **Valley of the Four Winds** Quest rulebooks together with a set of mass action rules for tabletop battles . . .

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Next issue:

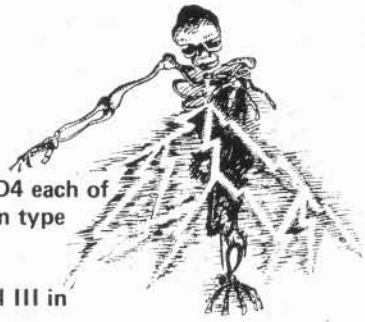
* **Barroom Brawl – D&D Style**
* **Weapons Additions for Traveller**
* **Humanoid Variations for Starships & Spacemen**
* **Fiend Factory**
* **Valley of the Four Winds – chapter IV**
* **Treasure Chest**
* **Open Box**
* **Molten Magic**

A regular feature introducing new and interesting monsters, edited by **Don Turnbull**.

I promised you a goodly collection of curiosities this time and I hope you agree with my view that the quality of this collection is particularly high. Without further ado, let's examine them.

BLINK SKELETON

by Brian Hanstock



No. appearing:	**1D10**
Armour Class:	**2**
Movement:	**12"**
Hit Dice:	**2D8+1**
Treasure:	**nil**
Attack:	**2 claws 1D4 each of by weapon type**
Alignment:	**neutral**
Intelligence:	**none**
Monstermark:	**25.0 (level III in 12 levels)**

This appears to be a regular skeleton but it has the ability to teleport, range 20'.

In melee it teleports on a roll of 5 or 6 on D6.

25% of Blink Skeletons have a 1-die magic missile.

Comments: another good upgrading of the regular Skeleton. I assume this turns on the Cleric/Undead table as a normal Skeleton, though there is a case, given it sometimes has limited magical power, for making it slightly stronger — say like a Ghoul.

INVERSE MONSTER

by John Culver

This monster looks exactly like any other monster and hence all characteristics are variable. However it acts exactly in the reverse way — so anyone who misses it actually hits, and anyone who hits it actually misses. The monster attacks in a similar way. High level characters who normally hit easily will tend to miss this monster, and if the monster is relatively weak (like an Inverse Orc, for instance) it will hit quite frequently. Damage is normal, both against the monster and inflicted by it, except that 'bonuses' become minuses. Saves are handled in the inverse way as well.

Magic is also 'inversed' but it is up to the DM exactly what the effect is. A fireball might cure the beast, a slow spell would speed it up etc. Remember it gets a reversed saving roll.

These monsters are often found with normal monsters of the same type, which confuses adventurers no end.

Comments: Something of a nightmare for the DM, this one, particularly if the Normal and Inverse varieties are involved in the same melee.

MIMBLE

by Tony Briskham

No. appearing:	**5D6**
Armour class:	**basic 9, but +4 to hit so effectively AC13**
Movement:	**18"**
Hit Dice:	**2D8+2**
Treasure:	**nil**
Attack:	**nil**
Alignment:	**neutral**
Intelligence:	**well, you tell me!**
Monstermark:	**not applicable**

Found jumping into walls, stuffing red-hot coals into its mouth or clubbing itself with a handy iron bar, this 3' high beastie can be somewhat unnerving. It suffers from extreme masochism and will throw itself on the nearest weapon. It has been known to gurgle with pleasure when hit by any weapon, boot or whatever. Unfortunately it can regenerate up to 8 hit points per melee round, even after it is killed, so is entirely indestructible. It also tends to reflect spells back on the sender (10% chance per spell level of the spell actually affecting the Mimble). Mimbles will always try to locate and follow the greatest source of pain.

Comments: I am at a loss for words on this one — it is one of the few monsters which has raised a loud laugh on first reading its characteristics.

FAMILIAR

by Trevor Mendham

No. appearing:	**1**
Armour class:	**8**
Movement:	**12"**
Hit Dice:	**1D8+1**
Treasure:	**see below**
Attack:	**1 bite (1D6) and two claws (1D4 each)**
Alignment:	**variable, as wizard**
Intelligence:	**animal**

This creature is a Wizard's familiar in the form of a small black cat, usually left to guard the Wizard's chest of assorted magical items. It sits on the chest and only attacks if attempts are made to get at the chest, or if it itself is attacked. Although not very strong, it has the traditional nine lives of a cat. Each time it is killed (so long as it has not used up all 9 lives) it is reborn stronger than it was before. For each life, add 1D8 to the hit dice (re-rolling hit points), add 1 point to damage of each attack, improve the AC by 1 and add 2" to the movement.

The Monstermark is rather meaningless since the party can break off combat at any time, the Familiar returning to guard the chest.

Comments: I'll bet there are many others who, like me, are saying "Why didn't I think of the nine lives of a cat in D&D?" An excellent and original idea. I sure agree with the comment about the Monstermark, but calculated it all the same in the event of the adventurers going on to kill the Familiar. It is interesting to observe the progression: First life 5.2 (level I); Second life 22.3 (level III); Third life 69.0 (level IV); Fourth life 164.0 (level VII); Fifth life 324.6 (level IX); Sixth life 587.8 (level X); Seventh life 1066.3 (level XI); Eighth life 1874.8 (level XI); Ninth life an impressive 3672.5 (level XII of course).

So no-one is likely to get the Wizard's treasure.

One weakness, however, is the fact that the designer didn't give the Familiar any innate magic resistance — a sleep spell would do the trick as it stands. Obviously no Wizard would have overlooked such an obvious point, so I suggest the magic resistance of the same level as that of the Wizard, probably with an additional bonus of 2 on saving rolls due to high dexterity. Apart from anything else, this increases the Monstermark still further.

I add in a small voice — did you realise exactly what a powerful beast you were creating, Trevor?

SANDMAN

by Roger Musson

No. appearing:	**1D6**
Armour class:	**3**
Movement:	**10"**
Hit Dice:	**4D8**
Treasure:	**100D20 gold pieces**
Attack:	**1 touch (special)**
Alignment:	**neutral with evil tendencies**
Intelligence:	**average**
Monstermark:	**none**

The Sandman is exactly what its name suggests — a man made entirely of sand. Everyone coming within 20' must save against magic or go to sleep, irrespective of level. Those who manage to stay awake must try to save again each time the Sandman touches them. The Sandman automatically attacks humans and never checks morale, but once it has succeeded in putting a victim to sleep, it never takes further action against him, leaving him quietly dozing while it goes off to search for someone else. If the encounter takes place in a lair, the Sandman will eject the sleepers into the corridor first.

Sleepers will not awake for 30 minutes no matter what happens. Thereafter there is a 10% chance per 10 minutes of a sleeper waking of his own accord, and 95% chance if he is violently disturbed.

Comments: one of the more straightforward of the Musson creations, but effective for all that. A 30-minute sleep gives a 50% chance of wandering monsters during this time — with no chance of awakening to defend. Again, the Sandman should I think have above-average magical resistance — it is vulnerable (just) to a sleep spell itself, for example. Wonder why the AC is so high?

EASTERN SKELETON

by Brian Taylor

No. appearing	**3D10**
Armour class:	**7**
Movement:	**12"**
Hit dice:	**1D4**
Treasure:	**Nil**
Attack:	**1 'open hand' for 1D4**
Alignment:	**Chaotic**
Intelligence:	**None**
Monstermark:	**About 1 (Level I in twelve levels)**

These skeletons are indistinguishable from others, except that they carry no weapons. They were in former life the members of an ancient order of Monks and have retained important attributes of this character class — they move at Novice speed and strike as a Novice doing 1D4 damage, but if the die-roll is 25% or better than the required minimum hit chance the hit either stuns for 3D6 melee rounds (01—75) or kills the victim outright (76—00).

For every ten skeletons present, there is a 10% cumulative chance that one of them is of a higher level of Monk, and, if one such is present it will have the movement and attacks appropriate to its level.

They are turned as ordinary skeletons by Clerics, but subject to the DM's discretion the higher levels of Eastern Skeleton can attain higher 'undead levels' on the cleric/undead table.

Comments: I am still wondering about the name — why 'eastern?' There have been a number of attempts to 'upgrade' the lowly skeleton, or to provide stronger versions of skeletons to surprise a party expecting easy pickings. This is one of the most logical attempts I have seen, though a skeleton which could kill with a single blow might be ruled too powerful by DMs. Perhaps the stun/kill option should be allowed to saving roll?

WARLOCK CAT

by David Taylor

No. appearing:	**1**
Armour class:	**6**
Movement:	**12"**
Hit Dice:	**7D8+2**
Treasure:	**Nil**
Attack:	**two claws (2-5 each) and one bite (2-12)**
Alignment:	**Lawful-Evil**
Intelligence:	**Average**
Monstermark:	**286 (level IX in 12 levels)**

The Warlock Cat is a demon-familiar invisible in light, visible in darkness as a wraithlike outline with glowing crimson eyes. It has the form of a tiger-sized domestic cat.

It can only be harmed by magic weapons and magical damage bonuses do not apply (so a +2 dagger would do 1D4 damage, not 1D4+2).

It will attach itself to a character and serve him, fighting off other monsters, scouting for treasure or whatever. It communicates by telepathy with its master only.

There is a price. Every gaming day it must devour one character; the master must himself choose the victim on pain of being devoured himself. Monsters will not satisfy this demand, and the Cat is impervious to magic of the Charm variety.

Comment: the sort of familiar most magic-users would be better off without, particularly since the PH now includes the Find Familiar spell. There should be some restriction on the 'master' it will choose, if it has a choice; it would prefer evil, or at least neutral, alignments and would presumably only latch onto a magic-user, not a cleric or even an assassin.

Perhaps it should also have a higher magic resistance?

BRAGGER

by Roger Musson

No. appearing:	**1**
Armour class:	**–8**
Movement:	**12" (18" flying)**
Hit Dice:	**1D8**
Treasure:	**Not a hope**
Attack:	**None (theoretically one hit @ 1D4)**
Alignment:	**Evil-chaotic (or so it says)**
Intelligence:	**Average**
Monstermark:	**None**

The Bragger looks just like an ordinary Imp. He wanders around the dungeon looking for people to talk to. He loves to brag at great length about how terribly EVIL he is, often with blood-curdling imitations of his victims' screams (which may attract other monsters). Actually, he's never been known to kill anyone in his life and probably hasn't got the nerve. If attacked, he usually ignores it and goes on jabbering — he is 75% magic resistant and therefore feels fairly safe, what with such a low AC. Usually the only thing which will cause him to separate from a party is daylight, which he abhors. He delights especially in annoying low-level paladins.

Comments: a dungeonmaster's delight whose usefulness is in inverse proportion to the frequency of its appearance. The first time it is met, the party will no doubt take ages, and have many trying experiences, before finding there's not much hope of getting rid of it, and the only way for them to handle the situation is to leave the dungeon by the nearest exist and go in another way. Future meetings need not last long, but progressively the beast will become more annoying to players and DM alike since it will simply be a nuisance and add nothing to the game once its 'properties' are known (though there will be times when it is confused with an ordinary Imp, adding a new dimension of uncertainty). I suggest one or two in every dungeon, but no more — and certainly no fewer!

DAHDI

by Mervyn Lemon

No. appearing:	**1D4**
Armour class:	**3**
Movement:	**6"**
Hit Dice:	**5D8+1**
Treasure:	**type D**
Attack:	**one touch 1D12**
Alignment:	**chaotic**
Intelligence:	**semi**
Monstermark:	**no idea how to start the calculation, even! I would put it on level IX of 12 levels, purely from instinct.**

The Dahdi is a mutant Mummy who was turned out of the pyramid when it tried to wear the trousers and control the purse-strings. It cannot be distinguished from a normal Mummy except that there is a 25% chance that the bandages on its face will have slipped allowing one black eye (a present from the Mummy who turned it out) to be seen. Some of its bandages may no longer be present and it may present rather a tatty appearance.

It cannot be affected by charm, sleep or mind-controlling/reading spells, but unlike normal Undead is impervious to magical and silver weapons. Only normal weapons affect it. If fire is used, the flaming oil or fireball is hurled back at the attacker with base score of 12 or better to hit (fireball damage as spell; flaming oil etc. 1D8 first round, 2D8 second round, then fire goes out). Holy Water is repelled towards the attackers and converted to acid (damage as fire). Any liquid containing alcohol, beer or wine etc., thrown at the Dahdi adds 1 to its Hit Dice each time. Only plain, non-holy water can injure or kill it (damage as fire).

Turning away by Clerics is reversed from normal. 1st, 2nd and 3rd level Clerics automatically turn a Dahdi away; a 4th level requires greater than 2 on 2D6, 5th level greater than 4, 6th level greater than 6, 7th level greater than 8, 8th level greater than 10, 9th level and above have no effect.

A bandage from a Dahdi, when used to bind wounds, heals 1D10 points of damage in (20 minus constitution) turns. The DM should roll for the number of bandages the Dahdi still has intact when first encountered. A bandage can only be used once. The healing properties of the Dahdi last only 5 turns after the Dahdi has been killed.

Obviously the rot of the Mummy's touch does not apply to the Dahdi.

Comments: this one made me carol loud and long with delight being in the good old tradition of the Nilbog and my own Withra (in which I obviously delight!). And if there are Mummies, there must of course be Daddies . . . . . .

Mervyn included an account of a scenario indicating their use which is well worth passing on to you. "By use of legend and rumour, in my case a tomb painting showing healers removing bandages from a supposed Mummy and using them on a wounded man who miraculously is repaired and dancing about in the next scene, my group of players knew something of its existence. However the first they encountered was, naturally enough, attacked as a Mummy – with fire. They reaped their own reward – first degree burns.

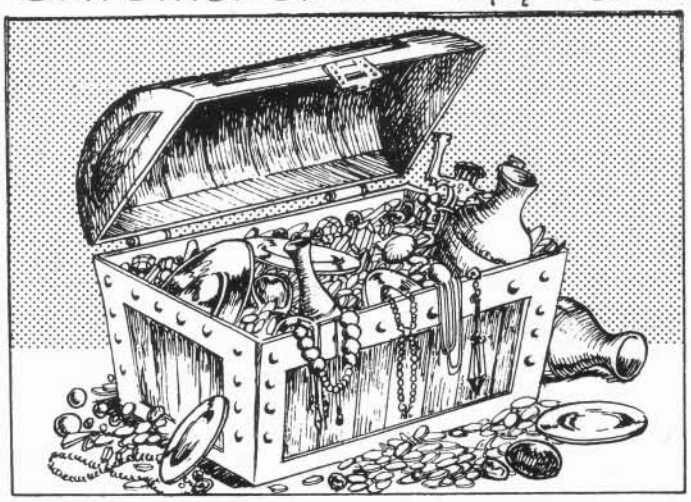
A desperate 2nd level Cleric advanced to minister to the damaged fighter and inadvertently said "Boo!" – the Dahdi ran away! The back-up members of the expedition, realising that this might be the healing Mummy, gave chase. Through the door, round the next bend . . . Ah! There he was . . . only he wasn't. It was the scout for a group of Mummies sent out to ensure that the Dahdi didn't attempt to return to the tomb!

The resulting confusion would have gladdened your heart, I am sure. Loud were the screams that the DM was changing the rules and being unfair. An unfair DM? Never – what a suggestion!"

Yes, I would have howled with mirth with the best of them (as a DM, of course – as a player I would no doubt have complained like hell . . .) An excellent creation, Mervyn, and one which the Greenlands adventurers will not thank you for creating. I must leave the last word on this subject to Mervyn again – ". . . one might consider the Behbi, son of Mummy and Dahdi . . . "

So, still chortling about the Dahdi, Mimble and Sandman especially, we close the factory doors again, but I can promise you more fun and more useful and interesting monsters next time. Though my own imagination is limited and goes in fits and starts, it seems that the collective imagination of *White Dwarf* readers is infinite – we can run many more issues of the Factory yet before we get to the bottom of the barrel.

TREASURE CHEST



TREASURE CHEST is open for contributions relating to D&D additional rules, character classes, magic systems, objects, tricks and traps etc.

Tricks & Traps

Competition Result

The Tricks and Traps Competition announced last issue brought in a large, albeit mixed, response. The standard was generally high and often amusingly inventive. Many of the traps submitted by different readers overlapped those of other entrants, making it difficult to publish all the best ones without duplicating ideas: so we have selected a wide cross section. Our thanks go to all the readers who submitted entries.

Frozen Food!

by David Bradbury

A stall in the dungeon, run by an almost invincible monster (e.g. a 20th level M.U.), sells food for extortionate prices. The special offer is deep-frozen troll's flesh (the wizard will claim it's beef). Once the meat has defrosted, it starts to regenerate and eventually becomes a whole troll, hell-bent on revenge. This could be unfortunate if the adventurers had left it to thaw overnight!!!

The Inter-Dimensional Cloning and Teleport Chamber

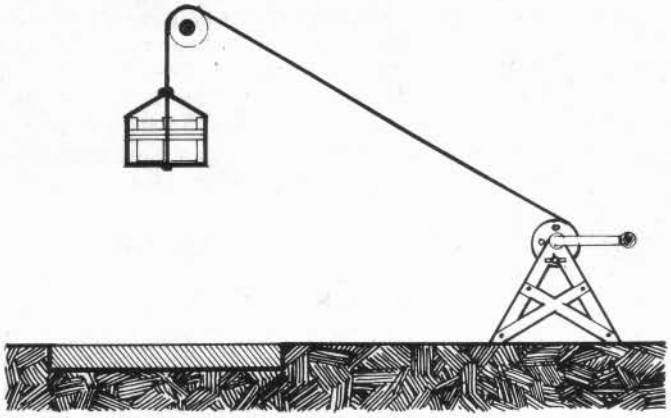
by Stephen Hellman

Anyone who enters this room will be immediately teleported to an inter-dimensional plane, where they are confronted by a figure exactly identical to themselves. This figure is a clone of the person who has been teleported and, being mindless, it will immediately attack. Magic does not function in this dimension so even magic-users and clerics will have to engage in physical combat to defend themselves.

The clone is an abysmal fighter and will be unable to hit the player unless the player allows it to do so. Conversely, any blow aimed at the clone will automatically hit it. However, such is the nature of the clone that any damage it receives is doubled and rebounded back at its opponent, leaving the clone unharmed. Similarly any damage that the player receives is doubled and rebounded back at the clone, leaving the player unharmed.

Thus the only way the player can harm or kill the clone is to allow it to strike him. Once a hit has been made by either side, the player is teleported back to the room. Although unpleasant, this trap is seldom deadly. Sadistic DM's could, once the players have tumbled how the clone operates, replace it with a doppelganger.

The Electric Chest
by Stephen Home



A treasure chest is suspended by a steel cable over a beam. The cable cannot be cut through by normal weapons and is attached to a winch, which is made of metal, with a handle, also of metal. In the floor, directly under the chest, is a metal plate which is charged by a strong electrical current. The plate cannot be seen directly from the winch. When the chest is lowered it will make contact with the plate sending a nasty shock through the cable to the unlucky holder of the winch. The damage is up to the DM.

Instant Vampire
by John Evans

A party passes a moderately quiet part of the dungeon and will notice red dust on the floor.No tracks are left in the dust (even by the party) and it does not seem to be disturbed by anything. However, should blood be spilt on the dust, it will revivify the vampire of which it is the essence. The vampire was not permanently slain, hence this relic of its vileness remains. Holy water spilt on the dust does 3D8 of damage to the vampire. Nasty DMs could give it a saving throw, halving damage, fractional damage not counting.

Party would be surprised on a 1–5 on a D6. The vampire would then receive only one free go as it must collect itself and get up from prone. If a party is not surprised, they may either determine initiative in the usual way, or be given first blow at the DM's discretion.

The Old Boot
by Bill Campbell

On entering a room, a dungeon party will notice a pair of old boots in the far corner. These boots appear to be elven boots, but should anybody try to use them as such, they will be very disappointed. After having put on either boot, the user will find his foot firmly rooted to the floor and at the same time a secret door will open in the opposite corner from which will emerge a minotaur (or a goblin if you are a kind DM). This enraged beast will attack the snared character whether or not there are other characters in the room. If the minotaur is killed, a search of its body will reveal a magic shoehorn needed to get the boot off.

Highly Strung
by Jack Baker

The walls of a room are smoothly mirrored, including the back of the door, which closes automatically, so that it is as a secret door. Four taut ropes descend from small holes in the ceiling and are tied to rings set in the floor near each corner. These ropes hold the floor up! In the centre three chains hang from small holes in the ceiling with 30' of their length coiled on the floor. If one chain is pulled the floor descends slowly and imperceptibly, another causes it to rise and the third causes it to stop. Since the walls are mirrored it will appear that the ceiling is moving. The chains are of fixed length, so heaven help any who descend more than 30 odd feet, or for that matter any who sever the ropes.

Puddles & Pitfalls
by Deirdre Evans

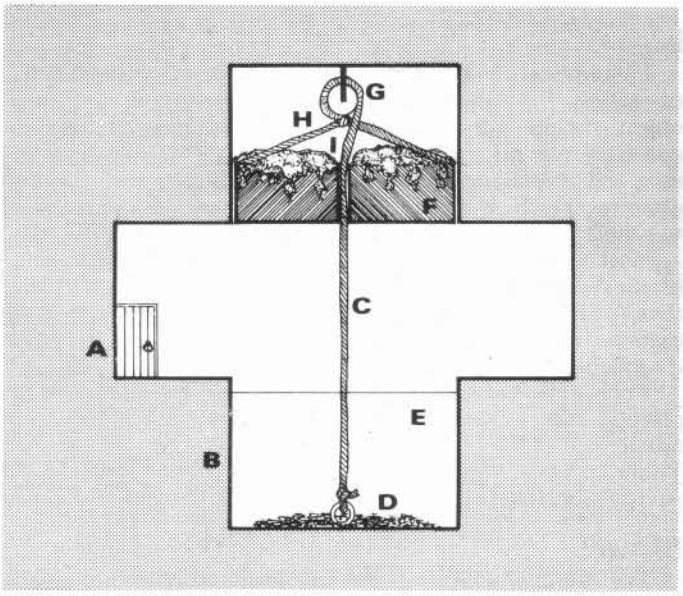
A rough mud road in the wilderness is dotted with puddles; but one puddle is a 20 foot deep water filled pit – very dangerous for travellers in plate armour.

Watch Your Step
by Deirdre Evans

Adventurers seldom seem to check for traps on stairs, so a trip-wire that releases a large boulder from the ceiling at the head of the stairs may catch them napping. The boulder will tumble down the stairway striking all those in its path for 3-36 points of damage. Those who manage to jump aside can be determined by saving vs. stone taking into account any dexterity bonus.

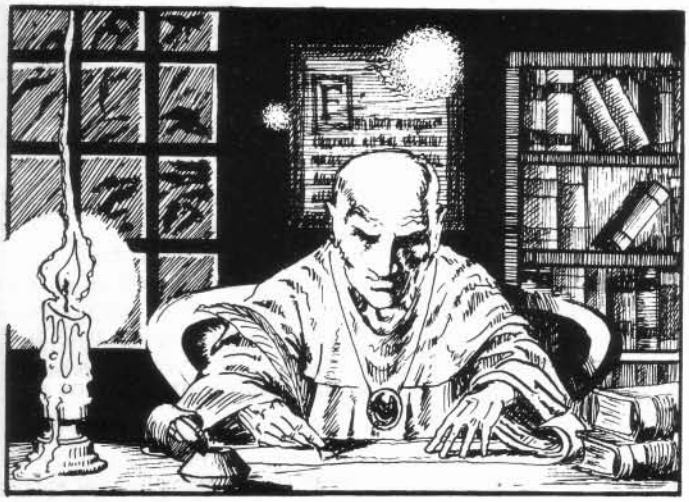
And now the winning entry in the competition. First prize of a White Dwarf *T-shirt goes to Roger Musson, whose entry below, was a cut above the others in many ways. A good combination of mechanics and monsters that seems almost certain to rain misery upon misery on any unfortunates who encounter it.*

The Pit and Rope Trick
by Roger Musson



Party enters the room through door (A) and sees a 10' x 10' x 10' pit in the centre (B) and also the rope (C), which is stretched taut between the iron ring in the floor of the pit, and a hole in the ceiling through which it vanishes. (This hole is very narrow.) On the floor of the pit is some treasure scattered about (D). What they don't see is that the whole pit is filled by a large Gelatinous Cube (E). Some DMs rule that these are naturally invisible in poor dungeon light, others that Cubes are only translucent rather than transparent. This Cube has had Invisibility cast upon it for good measure! The rope is coated with chemicals to protect it from dissolution – these chemicals are also highly inflammable. Once the Cube has been discovered, since it is very difficult to hack at something below foot level, the party may decide to burn the thing with oil. Alas! The ceiling just above the pit is a large loose block (F) which is supported by the rope (C) which loops over the pulley (G), and is knotted at (H) into four strands, one to each corner. When the rope burns, down comes the block, squelch into the pit, sending up a shower of pulverised Cube over everybody standing round. And if getting paralysed by the shower wasn't bad enough, there is a colony of Yellow Mould (I) on top of the loose block, which will not take kindly to the violent fall.

LETTERS



Readers' thoughts, suggestions, ideas, views, comments and criticisms. Letters should be sent to the Editor, WHITE DWARF, Games Workshop, 1 Dalling Road, Hammersmith, London W6.

Last issue we asked for readers' opinions with regard to the 'realism' argument. Here are some of the replies we received:

Dear WD,

I find myself in sympathy with the editorial on the subject of realism. Realism in fantasy games is almost defeating the object of playing them when carried to extremes. Realism is a necessary part of the game *atmosphere,* but to introduce die rolls and charts for every aspect in my opinion slows up the game too much. It bores the players and makes the time taken to simulate something quite unrealistic as play is slowed down so.

Most of the realism-type rules – I'm thinking particularly of the % chance of trout-tickling etc. in *Foresters* (see *White Dwarf 9*) – I find a bit uplayable when carried down to extreme levels. But it does no harm to have such rules available if some players require such detailed information.

I conclude that realism should be adjusted to whatever level players and referees prefer, regardless of other peoples' opinions.

Yours sincerely,
Andy Slack, Reading, Berks.

Dear WD,

The trouble with this realism debate is that too many assume that *realism* means (a) excessive complication (b) perfectionism. But neither of these are at all necessary, and probably not desirable either. Where an invocation of realism is worthwhile, though, are those sections of the rules that are not so much an oversimplification but are just plainly queer. To maintain, for instance, that it takes a light horse 5 mins to travel 240' (which is about 0.5 mph) is quite silly, and it takes no complicated tables to rectify the fault.

Best wishes,
Roger Musson, Edinburgh.

Dear WD,

Gary Gygax said in his letter in *White Dwarf 7* 'Combat, at best, is something to be done quickly so as to get on with the fun'. Has he never played with any combat rules in which choosing which sections of which types of armour to wear, choosing your weapons carefully, and even deciding what sort of blow to aim at the opponent add realism and fun (yes, FUN!!) to combat? This variety of combat is best played on a hexgrid with models.

Did I mention realism in the above paragraph? I can understand that some people do not have the imagination to invent realistic rules, but the game is enhanced no end by rules that make sense.

Gary Gygax claimed (in the same letter) that 'statements regarding "realism" in a game must go out the window'. Well, the original rules do have a certain amount of realism in them, so should they go out of the window too? No, of course not. But there is no disadvantage in rational, realistic rules. They do improve the game. They do add to the fun. They do make the game more complicated, but it does not suffer because of that. They do make nonsense of the sort of thing written by the so-called 'experts'. So What? As long as you get fun out of the game.

Fight On!
Hugh Tonks, Chelmsford.

Dear WD,

To play a good game of D&D, players' imaginations must make sure that the Dungeon in which they play is real and the dice being thrown fantasy. After all where is the entertainment in throwing sets of dice to discover the fate of a list of characteristics? Therefore to maintain this frame of mind, events in the dungeon must be credible according to the *BASIC* laws of a world (any world), and to say that a hero should be able to survive the breath of a dragon while chained to the wall just because it aids character development is ridiculous; the fantasy dungeon melts away before our eyes and we are left with the world of polyhedral dice, cups of cold undrunk tea, and piles of littered paper all covered with lists of figures carrying half forgotten meanings.

I hope my point has been made, and I advise all DMs to think carefully the next time they decide to aid a player by giving him a chance that he should not really have.

Q.E.D.
Roger Coult, Grimsby.

Dear WD,

You were quite right when you stated in last issue's editorial that there is no set way to play D&D. Nobody has the right to set himself up as a standard, either by claiming to be an 'authority' or even by quoting Gary Gygax – who has about as much control over his creation as the original Sorcerer's apprentice! Therefore, when discussing 'realism' in D&D it is important to state first how the game could be played.

If you are playing D&D as a 'game' – see Lew Pulsipher's articles in *White Dwarf* issues 1, 3, 4 and 5 – then it is probable that a rigid set of rules is being used which is known to all the players and the function of the DM is merely to generate new scenarios within the game system. In this sort of play, I can see no reason at all why D&D should be 'realistic' as all the players know exactly what to expect.

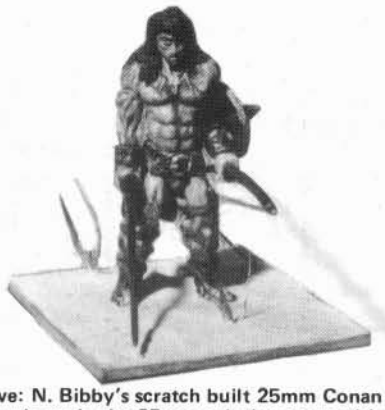
However, that sort of play does not really exploit D&D to its full potential. The players are not really 'role-playing', they are manouevring their pieces in a form of personalised wargame. In order to enjoy the full flavour of role-playing, I believe it is necessary to play D&D as a Kriegspiel, ie. a game in which the rules are known only to the umpire and the players make decisions as they would in 'real' life.

In this sort of game it is essential that the players have access to any information (eg. social customs) that their characters would have and that, after allowing for such things as magic, has enough internal consistency for the players to make rational decisions and not be caught out by loopholes in the rules. This does not mean that players should be deluged with trivia which are irrelevant to their actions, nor that they should be straight-jacketted into a society which accurately reflects France on August 3rd, 1123 AD. D&D is about fantasy and the players will not enjoy it unless the world is designed to enable their fantasies to be fulfilled.

'Realism', therefore, is only required in certain types of play and even then 'consistency' would probably be a better word to use. Authorities can be very useful in setting up the logic of your world but there is no reason to follow them slavishly. You never know, they might be wrong.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Tamlyn, Southampton.

GAMES DAY



Above: N. Bibby's scratch built 25mm Conan – joint winner in the 25mm painting competition.

A report by Ian Livingstone

On Saturday, 28th October 1978, at Seymour Hall, London W1, Games Workshop held its fourth GAMES DAY. To say the event was a success is a bit of an understatement! Some 2,500 people turned up on the day to participate in all the fun and games.

For those people unacquainted with GAMES DAY, perhaps a few words of introduction are necessary. The event was first staged in 1975 with the intention of bringing games playing, as a hobby, to a much wider audience. To this end it was decided that not only war and fantasy games would be featured, but other interesting and obscure games. Thus GAMES DAY has retained its unique appeal which this year made it Britain's No. 1 games event.

There was certainly something for everybody who attended. The demonstrations put on by the clubs were of the usual excellent standard, both visually and in play. Tabletop demonstrations of *Middle Earth, Zulu Wars, The Old West, Naval Battles, WW1 Aerial Battles, WW2 Tank Battles* and *Chariot Races* were well received, and a huge *French Grand Prix* race game using model cars attracted many onlookers. People wishing to improve their figure painting talents were able to tap the combined talents of Steve Kemp and Shaun Fuller who demonstrated basic painting techniques. Steve and Shaun also judged the Painting Competition.

In keeping with the unique flavour of GAMES DAY, there was the infamous Auction and also two 'corners' – Computer Corner and Inventors' Corner. The former was a demonstration on three micro-computers of two science fiction games – *Death Star Attack* and *Star Trek*. In the Inventors' Corner were Eric Solomon playing *Spellmaker*, David Wells playing *Checkpoint Challenge* and David Parlett playing *Ninety Nine*.

Of course, the *D&D* competition attracted its usual high attendance, and the organisers worked flat out all day to stay on schedule. Other competitions running throughout the day included *Cosmic Encounter, Diplomacy, Knights of the Round Table*, and many others.

The 20+ trade stands were kept very busy all day and many reported record takings for any convention ever! This was probably due in part to the fact there were many new releases at GAMES DAY including SPI's *War of the Ring*, the UK edition of the *Advanced D&D Players' Handbook* and many new miniature figures.

For the first time at GAMES DAY, there was a special guest of honour. We were very pleased to have Scott Bizar, director of *Fantasy Games Unlimited*, fly over from the USA specially for GAMES DAY. Scott was available all day to answer gamers' questions and also handed out the prizes to the competition winners. They were:

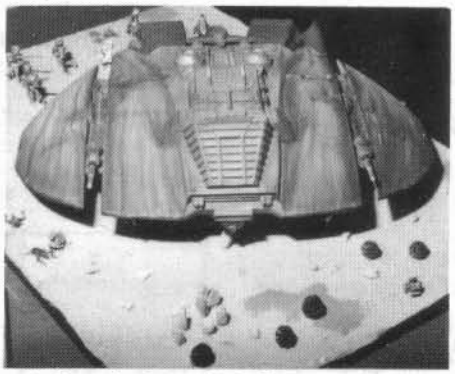
Dungeons & Dragons – J. Baillie
Cosmic Encounter – D. Thorby
King Arthur's Knights – S. Hayes
The Old West – G. Smith
Death Star Attack – Mr Donovan
Star Trek – H. Robertson
25mm Figure Painting – N. Bibby and Mr Chandler (equal 1st)
54mm Figure Painting – D. Mills
Diorama Painting – Mr Wiggley

Already plans are in hand for next year's GAMES DAY, and we hope you will continue to support Britain's No.1 games event. We would like to thank *South London Warlords, Harlow Wargames Group, Naval Wargames Society, Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group, Basingstoke Sorcerer's League, Skirmish Wargames, London Go Centre, London Draughts Association, Dave Rotor, Hugh Walters, Mike Ferguson, Rob Easterby, Andy Fletcher, Kendall Johns, Chris O'Dell, Steve Kemp, Shaun Fuller, Eric Solomon, David Wells* and *Scott Bizar* for their efforts, and of course all the *Games Workshop* and *White Dwarf* personnel for their willingness to work ridiculous hours.

Brief Comments from an American Observer:

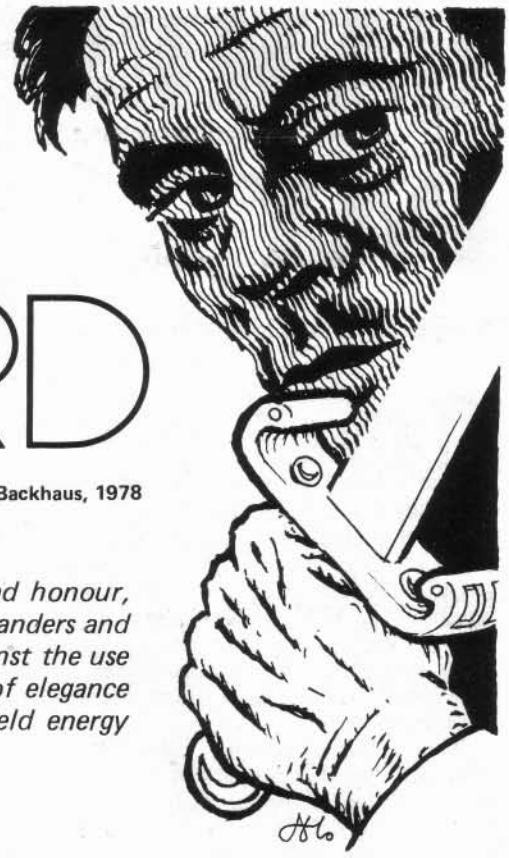
"Most Britons probably feel that the larger British conventions in the wargames field and fantasy games area are far smaller and less important than the better known conventions in the States. In actual fact, the size of conventions such as *Games Day* is very comparable to an American convention. The attendance at this year's *Games Day* (over 2000) would rank as the second largest convention in the States after *Origins*. Though many US conventions draw 1500 gamers, few reach 2000 or higher in attendance in a single day. The facilities available and activities at *Games Day* were certainly up to the standards of any US convention and I must confess to having thoroughly enjoyed myself at this year's *Games Day* and am already making my plans to attend next year's convention, which promises to be even bigger and better. *Games Day* has proven to be one of the most interesting and enjoyable conventions of the year."

Scott Bizar, Fantasy Games Unlimited



Left: From right to left, Games Workshop personnel, Steve Jackson, Albie Fiore and Ian Livingstone watch on as Scott Bizar of Fantasy Games Unlimited awards N. Bibby 1st prize in the 25mm figures painting competition. Centre: One of the entries in the diorama painting competition featuring a model of one of the Battlestar Galactica space vessels. Right: Games inventor Eric Solomon (right) playing his latest game, Spellmaker.

LIGHT SWORD



© Wilf Backhaus, 1978

"Citizens of that time were much concerned about their dignity and honour, defending both in duels to the death. Loss of life among innocent bystanders and damage to property resulted in stringent regulations to be passed against the use of energy pistols and other high velocity projectile weapons. An age of elegance was ushered in with citizens using the LIGHT SWORD (a fixed field energy projector) at close quarters to resolve points of honour."
(Light Swords: Their History and Use, Reel No. 572 2487 *Sioux Falls Gazette.)*

PLAYING THE GAME

LIGHT SWORD is a combat simulation played with characters created by the rules. Each player may have one or more such characters in play. Combat is a combination of skill and luck in the game using the character's abilities and the weapons he chooses as the basis. The winner is the player whose character survives the *Arena of Honour.*

CHARACTERISTICS

Players can decide to be male or female. Each character starts off with the base values on Table 1 below, to which can be added bonus points derived from rolling a six-sided die once and multiplying the result by 5. The bonus points may be distributed among the characteristics at will, though none may exceed 30.

Table 1: Base Values

	Male	Female
Strength (ST)	20	10
Speed (SP)	15	20
Reflex/Intuition (RI)	15	20
Build (B)	20	10

ABILITIES

Each characteristic results in different abilities which are relevant to combat, e.g. great strength allows a person to wear armour. Thus each characteristic contributes to the character's ATTACK COMBAT POINTS (ACP) and his DEFENSIVE COMBAT POINTS (DCP):

Strength – Each Strength point = 1ACP and ½DCP. A Strength of 25+ allows wearing of armour which increases the defence by 3DCP per Strength point over 25, *but* armour reduces all ACP derived from Speed in half.

Speed – Each Speed point = 2 ACP and ½DCP. A speed of 25+ allows for 2 attacks per combat turn.

Reflex/Intuition – Each RI point = ½ACP and 2DCP. An RI of 25+ allows the character to add +2 to the opponent's die roll.

Build – Each Build point = 2ACP and 1DCP. A Build of 25+ allows a character 3 ACP per Build point *but* a Build of less than 20 allows a character an additional DCP for every point over 10.

CHOICE OF WEAPONS

Before the actual game starts, the players must choose the sort of duel they desire to satisfy their honour:

Friendly: With Metal Swords

Honourable Wounds: To settle minor disputes and matters of honour, this duel is fought until first blood is drawn. Any weapon except the Light Sword may be used.

To the Death: Serious matters of honour or revenge are at stake and any weapon may be used.

WEAPONS

There are 4 weapons available to a player's character. The choice of weapon depends on the character's skill. Table 2 below lists these weapons, whether they are thrusting (T), cutting (C), or both (C/T). The skill required to use them and the damage done by each is also shown.

Table 2: Details of Weapons

Weapon	C or T	Skill	Damage
1. Metal Sword	C/T	15 ST	20 pts
2. Force Blade	T	15 SP	25 pts*
3. Slasher	C	25 B	30 pts*
4. Light Sword	C/T	25 RI +20 SP	40 pts*

* indicates that if the Sword scores a hit, a die roll of 1 on a six sided die means instant death.

WEAPON RELATIONSHIP

Some weapons are better than others and their use results in an advantage. The advantage is expressed in terms of additions to the attacker's ACP when facing certain swords, In Table 3, numbers on the left of the / represent the advantage for a *Cut,* those on the right of the / the advantage for a *Thrust.*

Table 3: Weapon Advantages

Defender	Attacker			
	Metal Sword	Force Blade	Slasher	Light Sword
Metal Sword	0/0	/15	10/	20/10
Force Blade	0/0	0/0	15/	20/10
Slasher	0/0	0/0	0/0	15/10
Light Sword	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0

COMBAT

There are three target areas: the Arms (A), the Legs (L), and the Body (B). Each player secretly chooses a movement: Back, Stand, Forward, or Charge; then a target area; (and whether with a cut or thrust; and also a defence: High Defence (HD), Low Defence (LD), and Special Defence (SD). SD is used only when the opponent has another attack in the round, due to speed of 25+ and only if the player defending has no second attack. Both players then reveal their choices and refer to Table 4 below. The numbers in this table are added to or subtracted from the die roll on the COMBAT MATRIX, Table 5. Both players are considered to attack simultaneously.

Table 4: Attacker's Modifications

		Attacker											
		Back			Stand			Forward			Charge		
Defender		A	L	B	A	L	B	A	L	B	A	L	B
Back	HD	+2	-3	+4	+1	-4	+3	+1	-2	+2	0	-1	+1
	LD	0	+2	+3	-1	+3	+4	-2	+4	+4	-3	+3	+5
	SD	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-3	-3	-3	-4	-4	-4
Stand	HD	+3	-2	+3	+2	-3	+3	+1	-4	+3	-1	-2	+3
	LD	-2	+1	+2	-2	+2	+3	-2	+3	+3	-3	+4	+4
	SD	-2	-2	-2	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-4	-4	-4
Forward	HD	+1	-4	+3	+1	-4	+3	+2	-3	+3	0	0	+2
	LD	-2	+4	+4	-2	+3	+3	-2	+2	+3	-2	+2	+3
	SD	-3	-3	-3	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4
Charge	HD	0	-1	+1	-1	-2	+3	0	0	+2	+2	-3	+3
	LD	-3	+3	+5	-3	+4	+4	-2	+2	+3	-2	+2	+3
	SD	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5

an S~F dueling game

The attacker compares his ACPs with the DCPs of the defender. The row is determined by the attacker's weapon, the column by the difference in ACP and DCP. The figure on the left of the / is for a *cut*, the other for a *thrust*. Two six-sided die are rolled and modifications from Table 4 added or subtracted. A HIT is scored with a total equal to or less than the number indicated:

Table 5: Combat Matrix

	Combat Point Difference (of the Attacker)									
	-50 or more	-30	-15	-10	0	+5	+10	+15	+30	+50 or more
Metal Sword	2/4	3/5	4/6	5/7	6/8	7/9	8/10	9/11	10/12	12/14
Force Blade	*/2	*/3	*/4	*/5	*/6	*/7	*/8	*/9	*/10	*/11
Slasher	1/*	2/*	3/*	4/*	5/*	6/*	7/*	8/*	9/*	10/*
Light Sword	1/3	2/4	3/5	4/6	5/7	6/8	7/9	8/10	9/11	10/12

WOUNDS

Only ACP and DCP are affected by wounds. Reduce the defender's ACP and DCP by the following after a hit:

Arm Hit: 2 x Weapon Damage Pts = ACP Lost
1 x Weapon Damage Pts = DCP Lost

Leg Hit*: 1 x Weapon Damage Pts = ACP Lost
½ x Weapon Damage Pts = DCP Lost

*Leg hits of 40 or more Weapon Damage Points means no *second* attack from the defender beginning the next complete round.

Body Hit*: 1 x Weapon Damage Pts = ACP Lost
2 x Weapon Damage Pts = DCP Lost

* Body hits of at least a total of 40 Weapon Damage Points means defender loses any +2 on opponent's die roll advantage.

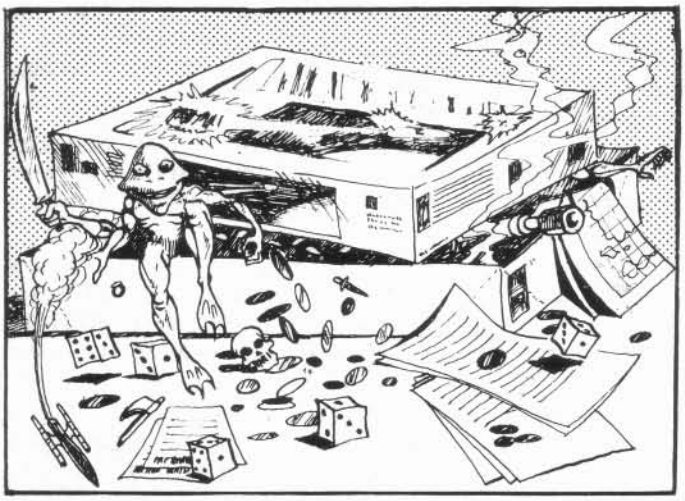
DEFENCE CHOICE EFFECTS

If the defender chooses the Low Defence and the attacker chose a Leg Attack, then the Weapon Damage inflicted is reduced by half prior to assessing the effect under WOUNDS. A High Defence will reduce Weapon Damage by half against a Body Attack.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

Players who wish to continue with the same character may develop their own system of awarding experience points and levels. The system for expertise given in Fantasy Games Unlimited's *Rapier & Dagger* is to be recommended as a guideline for character development.

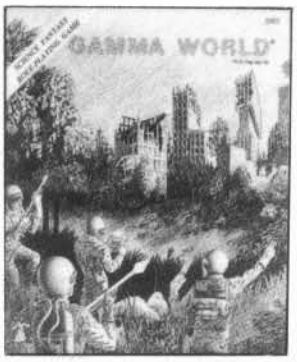
OPEN BOX



OPEN BOX examines Science Fiction and Fantasy games and rulebooks currently in the shops. The reviews have been written by either independent authorities or members of the White Dwarf Test Panel. The OVERALL figures on a 1–10 scale, rates the game itself taking all factors into consideration.

GAMMA WORLD

TSR Hobbies Inc – £6.95



With so many sets of rules for fantasy role-playing games flooding the market at the moment, the task of the new purchaser who wants to select just one set from the masses available is getting more and more difficult. How does one distinguish one set of rules from another? It's even more difficult in this genre than in the field of, say, board wargames since one of the essences of a role-playing game is that the referee (DM or whatever) is limited only by his imagination, whereas other game-types have regularised rules which at once inhibit and comfortably define the game. So if a game turns out to be unsatisfactory in play, are the rules at fault? Or the referee? Or even the players?

Nor does this make the reviewer's task easy . . . . . .

Let me deal with the obvious aspects first. This is a boxed game in that the rules, the map and a set of polyhedral dice (a nice touch, this) are housed in a colourful box which should attract the eye and single it out from its brethren on the shelves. The map (about 24" x 16") shows a continent not unlike North America on a hexagonal grid; it shows natural geographical features (mountains, rivers, lakes and the like) together with the locations of the largest cities of the Ancients. The referee is free to add terrain features – forests, swamps, active volcanoes and whatever else he thinks fit. He will note, too, that a number of the Ancients' cities are now underwater.

For this is a future-world game; the year is 2471 and the world has passed through a period of unprecedented devastation (the history is related, in fearsome terms, at the beginning of the rules). There are a few surviving pockets of humanity but many life-forms have been rendered extinct and others have mutated in horrifying ways. Players assume the character of a Pure Strain Human (without physical or mental mutation), mutated human or mutated animal. The name of the game is survival in the face of the terrifying world in which the players' personae must now live. Yes, there are many resemblances to the earlier TSR game *Metamorphosis Alpha* (a much under-rated set of rules in my humble opinion).

The rules are, of course, complete and explicit – we would expect this from TSR anyway. Briefly, they span Creating Characters, mental and physical Mutations (for humans, animals and plants), Time and Movement, Combat and Encounters, Creatures (nearly 50 of them, very credible and graced with better names than the creatures in Metamorphosis Alpha), Cryptic Alliances (humans, mutated humans and creatures banded together in secret of semi-secret organisations), Hazards (radiation and poison in particular), Artifacts and Equipment (a very comprehensive section) and Experience. At the end of the rules booklet there is a very useful section headed *Example Of Play* which contains useful design and play hints for the newcomer and experienced hand alike. Finally, all the important reference material has been assembled on half a dozen perforated pages for quick and easy reference.

Some of the rules are either similar or identical to those used in *Metamorphosis Alpha.* Examples are some of the mutations and their effects, the poison and radiation charts, some of the technological items. This is, of course, as it should be – if something works well in one game, why not transfer it to another game in a similar setting? Additionally, they can be transferred by referees from one setting to another – I know a number of D&D DMs who use the *Metamorphosis Alpha* poison chart, for instance, because the effects of poison is an area inadequately dealt with in the D&D rules.

One particular new system caught my eye – a set of charts which players use to see whether they can determine the nature of an unknown artifact. Fiddling around with something unfamiliar can be a rewarding process (when you find out, somewhat to your surprise, exactly what the thing is and how it works) or a suicidal venture (when you unwittingly set off an explosive device and leave your mortal frame for ever). As an attempt at regularising this sort of exploratory process these charts are welcome.

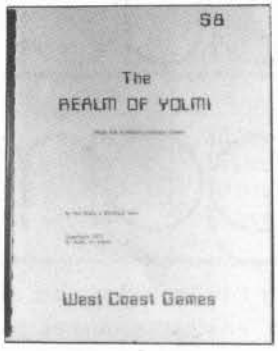
So there are the makings of a game here which no-one should find difficult to translate into game terms and an interesting design. I found it more coherent than many other sets of rules I have read and more complete than most.

And *Gamma World* is good quality – let there be no mistake. This has not been thrown together in haste by earnest amateurs over glasses of cheap booze. It is a thoroughly professional job which deserves a place on the shelf (and the playing table) of anyone remotely interested in the science fiction game-setting.

Overall: 9 **Don Turnbull**

THE REALM OF YOLMI

West Coast Games – £4.95



This is, in effect, technological D&D. The game is set on a future Earth which has suffered catastrophe not dissimilar to that which struck the world in *Gamma World* by TSR – men are semi-barbaric, animals have been mutated, automatons roam rampant. A leading news commentator has found immortality through drugs and has started his own religious sect – the UNDEAD of YOLMI (Cronk).

The rules are peppered with attempts at humour and what are obviously 'in-jokes'. I wasn't particularly amused, but other readers may find it funnier than I did.

This attempt at light banter rather spoiled the rules for me, though they appear to be complete and comprehensive if you can stomach the unnecessary attempts at wit. The book itself is around 120 pages long, A4 size and neatly bound in one of those spiral plastic binders.

I will stick to *Gamma World*, though adherents of that game may find some useful hints within Yolmi.

Overall: 2 **Don Turnbull**

ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS – PLAYERS HANDBOOK

TSR Hobbies Inc – £6.95

The quality of recent TSR publications is really most impressive – here is another hard-bound book, in the same style as the Monster Manual (reviewed in *White Dwarf 8*), which will gladden the heart of even the most discerning.

A word of explanation will not come amiss, particularly for newcomers to D&D. The original D&D rules and supplements are gradually being revised and replaced by a second edition. The first part of the second edition is the basic rule-book *Dungeons & Dragons,* which comes either separately or in a boxed set including geomorphs, monsters and treasure assortments and a set of polyhedral dice, forming a complete basic game-system which can be used in isolation from the rest of the material and which is of particular value to the newcomer. The second part is the *Monster Manual,* the third part is the *Players Handbook* and the fourth part is the eagerly-awaited *Referees Guide* which is in course of preparation. Finally TSR will add a much-expanded second edition of the *Gods Demi-Gods and Heroes* supplement. As I see it, the Monster Manual, Players Handbook and Dungeon-Masters Guide will form the complete game-system for Advanced D&D, with GDG&H as an optional extra.

The Players Handbook does not, therefore, contain information which will later appear in the Referees Guide – the treasure tables and descriptions, cleric/Undead matrix, listings of magical artifacts and their properties. Which means that the inexperienced DM will have rather a hairy time if his players are all armed with the new Players Handbook (though he should find enough information to carry him through in the first edition rules and supplements).

I don't think I have ever seen a product sell so quickly as did the Handbook when it first appeared on the Games Workshop stand at Dragonmeet. As Ian Livingstone remarked (he was standing on one side with a slightly bemused air, watching the crowds press forward in the queue for their copies), it was as though Games Workshop had suddenly invented sliced bread. As I am sure many others did, I burned the midnight oil after Dragonmeet perusing this new acquisition and becoming more and more engrossed.

When I first started reading the Handbook, I jotted down notes of changes which had been made to the original rules, but it wasn't long before I realised that a review which listed all the changes would be nearly as long as the Handbook itself. Suffice it to say that whereas the original rules are ambiguous and muddled, the Handbook is a detailed and coherent game-system, and very sophisticated.

A few examples (there are many) will serve to illustrate: fighters, clerics and thieves have improved hit-dice (D10, D8 and D6 respectively); the effects of strength on hit probability, damage, weight allowed, open doors are changed; high intelligence confers slightly more chance of spell knowledge and language facility; wisdom now gives clerics a spell-bonus while low wisdom gives a chance of spell failure; there are new charts delineating the effects of constitution, dexterity and charisma; there are five main character classes (including the Monk) and five sub-classes (Ranger, Paladin, Druid, Illusionist and Assassin) each with its own 'experience' table; most classes find it slightly harder to gain promotion above third or fourth levels; first level clerics now have one spell; paladins are much more powerful but have to satisfy more rigorous criteria; supplies are much more expensive; there is a non-decimal monetary system in which 1GP is now worth 20SP for example, and huge lists of spells and their descriptions (many new ones in all classes), multi-classed characters, the seven races and their advantages/disadvantages and many other things.

However those who have grown up on the first edition need not be alarmed – all this is completely compatible with the familiar system and I don't believe it will be long before the necessary changes and adjustments are taken under the belt; as in all things practice and habit are great teachers. I have no shadow of a doubt that the Advanced rules will be accepted and incorporated into campaigns currently in progress, though the DM will, as always, have the final say as to what is and what isn't allowed in his dungeon/world.

Of course, perhaps the most important function of the Handbook is as a source of reference; no more searching through stacks of magazines and books to find the information you are seeking (dammit – what issue of *Strategic Review* contains the stats for rangers? and where did I put the copies of *Strategic Review* anyway?). Pretty well everything needed is here, carefully compiled and indexed; if it isn't here, it is in the Referees Guide of which I for one can't wait for my copy. There is little more I can say. If you already have a copy, you may share my apprehension at the amount of time it is going to take to digest all this new material, but I suspect you also share my whole-hearted welcome of it. If you haven't, and you are the least bit interested in D&D, the sooner you get a copy the better. I said of the *Monster Manual* that it was TSR's most impressive publication to date; that is no longer true – this accolade must belong to the Handbook which is nothing short of a triumph.

Overall: 10 **Don Turnbull**

THE MANUAL OF AURANIA

Singh, Wagner & Stehle – £1.75

I suppose one would describe this 30-page booklet as a D&D play-aid. It contains a miscellany of D&D ideas – new character classes, new monsters and a couple of random reincarnation tables. The Manual is stencil-printed and contains a number of illustrations which have reproduced excellently.

The text is by no means clear of errors; even in the acknowledgements there is a misprint of one of the contributors' names which is a pretty bad start. However the errors need not confuse a sensible reader.

I am not enthusiastic about increasing the number of character classes in D&D, so the first section did not fire me with great enthusiasm. Those who like expanding the range of character classes may find something here to interest them, though it seems to me that most, if not all, these new creations are stronger than they should be, with no corresponding increase in weak points.

I can take the reincarnation charts or leave them – no doubt others have been compiled in similar vein. A 4% chance of reappearing as a Golden Dragon seems to me rather high, for instance – the same chance as reappearing as a Gnome and four times the chance of reappearing as an Ent. No doubt any table of this sort could be argued at length and inconclusively.

There are nearly 60 monsters, including six types of Troll, nine Undead and the inevitable nine Dragons. It is in this section that I think most readers will find their main interest lies. I particularly liked the Undead section (though was sorry to see yet another Banshee appear, dissimilar to both of those we have at the moment) and will be using some of these. Elsewhere Lewis Carroll has been used as a 'source' – we have the Jub-Jub Bird, the Snark, the Boojum, the Bandersnach (sic!) and the Jabberwock – not particularly imaginative, but fiction sources are running dry rather rapidly for monster-creators.

On the whole, it's not a bad booklet and a reasonable buy for the money.

Overall: 4 **Don Turnbull**

The Experienced Traveller

Part II

by Mike Ferguson

At the back of Book 2 in *Traveller* two pages are spent detailing how a character may increase skills already possessed, or temporarily increase his combat requisites (strength, endurance and dexterity). What it basically boils down to is if you spend 8 years training you can increase a skill by +1. Even then there is only a 40% chance that your character will be able to stick the course (8+ on 2DG). Although the book does not say it, presumably you can do other things during those 8 years and just attend a regular refresher course – a sort of night school. Whatever happened to good old full time education? In the *Traveller* universe it seems to be ignored once you reach the age of 18.

Last issue I presented methods of increasing skills already possessed by continuous use. That part was fairly straight forward and can be applied to most SM's universes. This time I shall describe ways of gaining new skills through various means of full and part time education. This means that the methods are purely subjective and depend very much on how the SM has decided to run his universe. What I am providing here is merely notes and ideas for you to adapt as you see fit to your particular campaign.

First of all I'll deal with the hard slog method of enrolment at a school or university and spending 5 days a week learning the subject(s) desired. This should take a relatively short time depending on the number being learned. Assume that up to four subjects can be studied at one time as long as they are fairly compatible (see *Table 1* below).

Table 1

I	II	III	IV
Piloting	Computing	Admin	Medic
Ship's Boat	Navigation	Steward	(count as
Air/Raft	Electronics	Leadership	two
Vacc Suit	Mechanics	Tactics	choices)
	Engineering		

Taking combinations of subjects in the same column should be relatively easy. It should be possible, though more difficult, to take subjects from two columns. (Remember we are dealing with, or may be dealing with, university or college equivalents with planned curricula and usually only those courses that are relatively popular will be available – I suggest a roll of 7+ on 2D6 to see if a choice is possible). Choices from three columns should be hard to accomodate (12+) and should usually only be available through private education.

The time taken for such education should also depend on the number of courses being taken. Assume that the university or college operates all year round and that there are regular 3 month examinations in each subject, and when you pass an exam it means you are qualified in that subject at level 1. See *Table II* below for the length of time a course should take and the basic scores on 2D6 needed to pass.

Allow the following modifications. Intelligence 8+ = DM +1. Education 8+ = DM +1 except for those subjects which require an education of 8+ to take in the first place (see *Book 1* page 11). Intelligence 5- = DM -1; Education 5- = DM -1. Also roll 3D6 and consult *Table III* for further modifications due to attitude to study.

Table II

No. of subjects taken	Length of Course	Score needed to pass each Exam.
1	6 months	5+
2	9 months	6+
3	12 months	6+
3	9 months	7+
4	12 months	7+

Table III

Die roll	Effect	DM
3	Only here for the social life	-3
4	Only here for the beer	-2
5–6	Doesn't work hard at all (optionally extend course by 6 months or suffer DM)	-1
7	Still doesn't like hard work but not as bad as before (optionally extend course by 3 months or suffer DM)	-1
8–13	Perfectly average student	none
14–15	Hard working	+1
16	Very hard working – reduce length of course by 3 months	+1
17	Burns the midnight oil – reduce length of course by 3 months	+2
18	Takes to courses like a duck to water. Half length of course. Also when taking exams any natural roll of 11 or 12 means that he has qualified at a skill level of +2 in that subject	+3

Having obtained a skill level of 1 in the required ability the character can now go on to increase his skill through continued use, as outlined last issue, or spend more time at college training to higher levels. For skills above +1 I would suggest that no more than 2 subjects be taken at one time and that the length of time increases rapidly with the skill level, eg. +2 = 18 months, +3 = 48 months (+3 Medic is equivalent to a doctor which requires 5 or 6 years at present day standards).

Of course the details given here are assuming that the education methods are not much different from present day methods. We can assume that technologies of the future will probably develop much better teaching aids than are available to us today. I shall include here a short section on educational aids developed for use in my campaign. Once again the use of these methods, and their availability is purely subjective – you may not even have such methods in your universe.

There are two main types available. They are:

(a) *Hypnotapes*: the subject goes into periodic trances while details of the necessary information are fed into his mind. Hypnotape technology starts in worlds of Technological level 7, where applied use of tapes will halve the time taken to study a course and give an exam DM of +1, to Technological level 12 hynotapes where 24 hrs application will give you a skill level of +1.

(b) *RNA*: the subject is given regular doses of RNA which has the same effect as various hypnotapes. The advantages of RNA are (i) any skill, including combat skills can be learned, and not just those listed on *Table 1*, which are all hypnotapes will cover, and (ii) there is no theoretical limit to the skill level to which RNA can raise you. However, I have ruled that there is a practical limit of +3, although higher levels can be researched. Technology for RNA should begin around level 12, and end at about level 15 or 16.

The second sort of education available is apprenticeship. Here you can be taken on as an apprentice in a trade that can teach you the skill you want. Any non-combat skills can usually be learned here at least to level +1. 'Free Trader' type ships are the best to enroll with as the types of skills they need and use cover nearly all the skills found on the table in *Book 1*. (The only exceptions I can think of would be Admin, Tactics and Forward Observer and these aren't the most popular skills anyway).

Apprenticeship should be for a number of voyages or years (although I can imagine that any 'bright' pupil would be quite welcome to stay on as a full member of the crew of most 'Free Trader' ships). For every 3 voyages or 6 months roll two dice to see if the character has learned his 'trade'. To succeed in this a score of 8+ must be rolled. However, add to the score +1 for every skill level of the person teaching the character and any DMs generated on *Table IV* below.

Table IV

Score		DM
2	Uncommunicative person, very poor teacher	-2
3 – 5	Poor teacher, does not put ideas over well	-1
6 – 8	Average teacher	none
9 – 11	Good teacher	+1
12	Excellent teacher	+2

Of course the player should not know (except possibly by rumour) what sort of teacher his 'boss' is. More than one subject may be taken at a time and if this is done add an extra two months or one voyage for each extra skill being learned to a maximum of 4 skills (1 year or 6 voyages).

One advantage of apprenticeships over universities or colleges is the cost. Fees are very expensive for universities, while a favourable reaction will result in the apprentice being paid a wage. However, apprenticeships do turn out to be unreliable and can be terminated by the 'employer' at any time.

Some skills, such as gambling, will require only a short time to master at level 1. Allow, say, five weeks hard study minus 1 week for each level of the tutor. For this skill, apprenticeship or universities are not needed, merely a willing teacher.

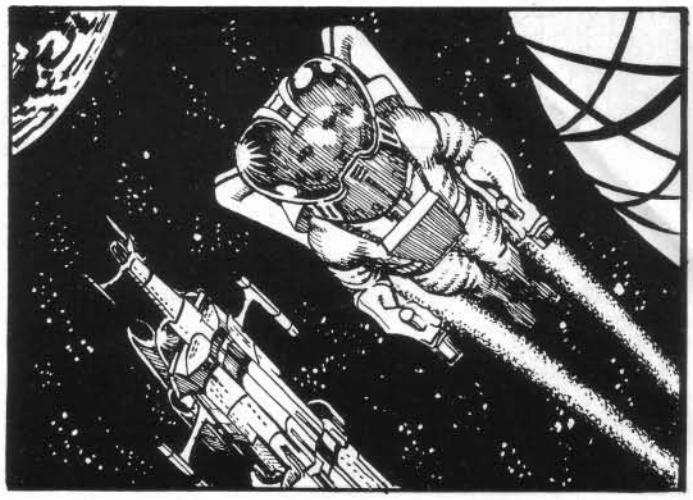
Similar ideas also apply to combat skills. In fact a good swordsman may even set up an official fencing school to teach blade combat and there may be marksman's clubs to learn gun combat. Usually 'legal' lessons in weapons specifically used for combat will be available only through private tutors (this is where streetwise skills come in handy in locating tutors) but weapons used for 'sport' will be quite easy to be taught the use of. (It all depends on the law level of the planet). For combat skills allow 10 weeks minus 1 week for every skill level of the teacher to reach level +1, 6 months to reach level +2 and 18 months to reach level +3.

Another thing about combat skills is once you've learned to use a sword it's not too difficult to use a foil, and firing a revolver is not too different from firing a body pistol. In *Table V* below I have listed the weapons available in *Book 1* into groups. Once you have learned the use of one weapon in a group then you will be able to use any of the others in the same group at a skill level of half the skill in the particular weapon you are specialising in (round half levels down).

Table V

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Dagger	Foil	Spear	Body Pistol	Carbine	SMG	Shotgun
Blade	Cutlass	Halberd	Auto Pistol	Laser Carbine		
Cudgel	Sword	Pike	Revolver	Laser Rifle		
	Broadsword	Bayonet	Carbine	Auto Rifle		

Finally we get to the increase in requisites. Theoretically it should be impossible to make a person stronger, or more dextrous, or give him greater endurance without undergoing major surgery. Yet any of the forces you can join will increase your requisites if you get the right die roll, and this increase is permanent. The only way I can see in which this can be justified is that although there is no actual increase in physique the character receives training in how to use his abilities more effectively. (Think of Japanese Samurai; originally these men were no more dextrous than their neighbours, but because of



training moved faster, reached faster and outfought most other 'hand-to-hand' combatants.)

If a character wishes to increase his combat requisites he must find a teacher (such teachers should be fairly rare and will probably be booked up well in advance) and spend time learning how to increase these scores. Every three months he must roll 7+ for each ability to gain +1 up to a maximum of 4 more than his original roll. (Eg. if a person originally rolled 9 for strength and then joined the Navy and during his time there added 2, if when he left he wished to increase his strength further he could add a maximum of 2 more to it, to total 13.)

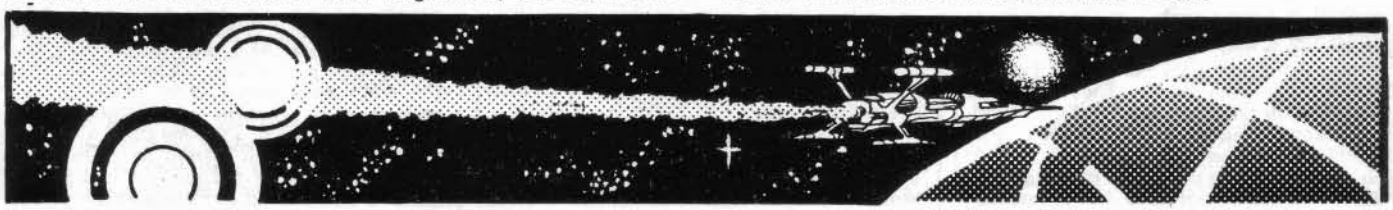
Alternate to the above method I have worked out an experience system for those that continually fight hand-to-hand combat and thus gain more skill in combat. It is based purely on the damage caused in melee with modifiers. After a melee, if a character has survived, calculate the total number of points of damage inflicted by that character and multiply this score by 20 and divide by the average damage done by the weapon(s) he was using. (Average damage = minimum score + maximum score divided by two, eg. a cutlass does 20 + 4 damage, average damage = 6 + 16 ÷ 2 = 11). The resulting score is the earned experience. Once enough experience has been earned (see *Table VI* below) increase the requisite by 1 and start earning experience all over again.

Table VI

		Experience
Increase requisite from	2 – 3	250
"	3 – 4	450
"	4 – 5	600
"	7 – 8	800
"	8 – 9	1000
"	9 – 10	1200
"	10 – 11	1400
"	11 – 12	1600
"	12 – 13	1800
"	13 – 14	2000
"	14 – 15	2200

Non-combat requisites, with the exception of social status, can be increased as outlined for the first part of combat requisites. For increase in social status have a look at En Garde for a few ideas of what it involves.

Well I guess that just about wraps it up for experience in the game of *Traveller*. If anyone has any comments or ideas on improving the system I would certainly like to hear from them. Please write to me care of *White Dwarf*.



Valley of the Four Winds

by Rowland Flynn ©1978

Chapter Three
IN GREENGORM FOREST

Hero and his band, seeking means to lift the wizard Hajjin's bane from Farrondil City, have aided the Gondemarian dwarves in battle — with a twofold reward — a mysterious pouch of "Swan Bones" and directions to the north, through sinister Greengorm Forest . . .

The forest darkened as the wary band penetrated further, and strange portents flickered beneath the twisted trees, always too distant to be clearly seen. Thick forms that coiled and coiled again dissolving in uneasy vapours as the horsemen pressed on . . .

Madoc gave voice to their feelings: "I'm grateful, almost, for this green gloom. Some things I'd rather not see too clearly." His joking tones cheered none; but Anvar whistled derisively.

"These mouldering woods hold naught to affright a Northman!" He whisked the longsword from his back-sheath and whirled it in bravado. "I've seen the snow-devils running on the high ridges, the mist-things creeping from the rifts — and none of 'em will face cold iron."

Hero smiled indulgently over his shoulder; Pursio murmured, "Aye, these Northmen are wise — in the North."

Anvar paused, about to sheathe the sword. His full black beard bristled, his nostrils flared. "Mock not the North, manikin. Its ways are just and true. Northmen laugh at misty visions, Northmen stand true before real peril — aye, and Northmen divide all spoils, not hide 'em from their own trusty men!" And he glared full at Hero, and angrily shot the sword home into the sheath.

"You lie," growled stout Stefison, and the other Guardsmen, little Lucas and dark Morgen, nodded their support of Hero. But Rhys smiled: "Your secret gift from the King, Hero, of which the rest of us know nothing?"

Hero quite forgot the peering phantom shapes among the trees. He sighed. "Nothing escapes a bard's eye, 'tis said. The thing is no treasure, but magical Swan Bones to aid our quest."

Rhys's eyebrows went up a fraction. Light stirred in Madoc's eyes . . . "No treasure? Men have slaved lifetimes and died for . . . but no matter."

"Then let these bones be divided amongst us," Anvar rasped. "Else, if good Hero falls, our talisman may be lost entire."

Something stirred in the trees again and caught their gaze; a lumpish dwarf-thing, all head and legs; no, just a nodding bush, a swirl of mist, a . . . something better not looked on. It leered and faded. The silence was broken by Pursio, who swiftly said, "Nay, nay, the magic fails if once the bones are scattered, as Hero well knows. We should not speak of such matters here." He looked uneasily about him.

Hero wondered what Pursio was about — to him, the seven oddly-shaped bones he could feel through the pouch's thin cloth were wholly wrapped in mystery. Aloud he said, "Pursio speaks truth — and I wonder at you, Anvar, storing up such mistrust in your mind. But this is not time for debate and counsel. A song, Rhys! to lighten the forest gloom."

"Twll d'un bob saes," swore Rhys in an outlandish tongue. "A bard of my rank, think you, should bawl away on horseback?" But without allowing time for reply, he broke into a bawdy song which (though Hero winced) lifted their spirits well enough as twilight thickened and the shadow-shapes danced beneath the increasingly gnarled and mossy trees.

An uncertain time after, Hero decided that true night was close; "We camp here," he called when next they found a clearing. Spirits were higher now, for the writhing ghost-forms faded with the greenish light; their menace also dwindled with familiarity. This disturbed Hero, and (while Lucas laid a fire and Stefison delved for viands in the saddlebags) he spoke quiet words with little Pursio. "We are less affrighted, having come so far without hurt. Think you that this forest seeks to lull us?"

Pursio shrugged. "My terror is great as ever," he said smiling.

"No doubt. — And what of these so wondrous Swan Bones? What is their power?"

For the first time, Pursio's eyes fell. "The King supposed I knew, my master. I studied the Great Lore awhile in Gondemar, ere cast out for my manlike aspect . . . I studied it, I say, but the studies are forty years past. The bones hold great power, yet the user must wield knowledge. Blood I remember, blood and a mirror. I shall have it soon — be patient —"

So the Swan Bones' time was not yet. Hero, distrustful of magic and ready to suspect evil taint in the purest of charms, was not wholly displeased. He did not see himself as a magician.

About the now-blazing fire, Rhys and Madoc swapped jokes with only the faintest uneasiness; Stefison dealt expertly with Gondemar's spiced meats; Anvar sat a little apart, staring moodily into the crackling heart of the flames. Men of Farrondil traditionally camped with much merriment, but this was now subdued — as though all realised without saying that under the shrouded night, things unseen might be worse by far than things seen in this most dubious forest.

* * *

This faint shadow persisted as they prepared for sleep beneath the creaking trees. Old, seasoned Lucas took the first watch, and Hero should have had sound sleep; but he turned restlessly on the unyielding ground. Dreams came wherein those that drifted among the trees enticed him with strange smiles, loosing their robes to show that which to look upon was madness; worse dreams where Hero flitted himself in their company, an abomination among abominations, his stout companions twisted too into shapes of horror from which he woke almost with a scream . . . The watch changed, and with sore eyes and aching head Hero saw Lucas curl up to sleep as Anvar slipped into the trees, there to circle the camp with silent, watchful tread in Northern fashion. The banked fire threw monstrous, smoky shadows. Hero flung himself again into slumber . . . and slowly another dream took shape.

The camp was dead, lifeless. The company lay unmoving, and dreaming Hero knew it was useless to waken them. Anvar had vanished; Anvar was in peril; Anvar must be rescued from the nameless evil. With the lucidity of dream, Hero knew where to find him: he walked into the forest past a knotted tree, turned at the moss-bank he knew he would find, stepped across the sluggish stream which threw back but the tiniest of sparkles from the indecisive starlight . . . Of course Hero had brought no sword, for what use are swords in the land of dream? He bore the Swan Bones; nothing else mattered. *Yes*, he thought with a sort of clarity as he entered a second, smaller clearing spotted with bulbous fungi: *yes, Anvar will be here*.

It was then that his tranced footsteps encountered a fallen branch, and he fell with numbing force to the ground. There was pain, and he knew that real pain cannot tread in the land of dream. He opened his eyes — to find himself where he had dreamt, alone in dark cold, wet with dew. No, not alone, for here was Anvar after all, coming anxiously to his aid — and another behind him —

Hero, half awake, could not dodge the brutal kick which this transformed Anvar aimed into his belly. He gasped, retched, writhed as Anvar kicked again. The other shape, a gleaming figure, came closer. Even as consciousness ebbed, Hero felt small, nimble fingers feeling delicately through his garments.

* * *

And again he wakened, stiff and bruised, to lose himself in adoration. Night still pressed about, but could not conceal the radiance of the woman kneeling naked at his side, easing his bruises with a touch and smiling into his wondering eyes. Anvar squatted nearby, enraptured also. In Hero's mind there stirred far-off memories of Princess Allathea: but strain as he might, he could recall no detail of her face. And this woman's hair fell with such silvery glory; her skin was an opalescent wonder; her breasts . . .

"What would you, my lady?" he said earnestly.

She smiled again. "Come with me, you and your great rough friend, to Mother Sulphur's court. We woodfolk need good men to join us . . . will you dance on the wind with me, and lie with me in the treetops, and live forever with me, most noble Hero?"

Anvar blinked, seemingly not understanding. Hero gaped at this woman's beauty, thrilled to her cool touch, knew he would do anything for yet five more minutes in her glorious presence . . .

And then a harsh and hateful voice rapped out from the surrounding woods. "My master, my master, are you there?" Some bond began on the instant to weaken; Hero rose to full wakefulness with an effort like that of climbing a mountain, and realised that this voice which had snapped the cords of delight was that of Pursio.

"Here Pursio, here!" he called into the night, and turned again to the woman. But her glory was strangely faded: a young woman she was, but never, never to be compared with the Princess Allathea, whose delicate features now returned in their full beauty to Hero's mind. He looked again at the still-silent woman, eyes straining: she seemed each moment more difficult to descry, a phantasm, a hollow shell, a wisp of white vapour which drifted up beyond his vision. A witch, he realised, she had been a witch — and dazzled by false glamour, he had

nearly joined her in the forest courts. He tried not to think of the legends of those lost to the witches — tried hard, but the horrid visions pressed in on him. His evil dreams had been almost prophetic.

"What means this mischief?" said Pursio, emerging at last from the darkness. "You gone, and none to watch, and only I able to follow your track in this hellish dark —"

"It was I," said Anvar dully. "She came to me. She . . . she . . .I could not but obey her. She said she would draw you forth, for the Swan Bones were a great peril from which you must be saved. She said that even now the evil had so worked on you that you'd fight to keep them."

"Aye,"said Hero without sympathy. He felt his inner pocket where the bones had been stowed. "And where are they now?"

Anvar did not seem to hear. "So I helped her take them from you, for she was so lovely and I — my heart was still hot from words spoken earlier — forgive me, Hero! She took the bones from you, but I said that if they were so fell she must not carry them, and laughing she gave them to me. Oh, I was bewitched! Take your talisman, Hero, and may I never again covet it." Here Anvar fumbled in his belt pouch and drew forth something which he placed in Hero's eager hands — something which, as they studied it in the light of the rising moon, proved to be a handful of twigs and leaves bound up with grass.

"Never trust a witch," said Pursio philosophically.

* * *

Dawn broke in Morgen's watch, and the party roused to a breakfast of furious planning. Madoc had a vague theoretical knowledge of the forest ways; Pursio and Damzik, after much argument, decided that Mother Sulphur, evilly reputed coven queen and certain holder of the stolen bones, held court between the Twins of Linsi, two rounded barren hills that rose from the woods to the northeast. All agreed that the bones could not be abandoned and that a raid must be made on this witchy stronghold (though none knew how). With spirits slightly raised at the prospect of action, they marched northeast through the rustling and populous woods, sparkles of sunlight dazzling them through the ever-swaying foliage.

"You are silent," said Hero to the dour Gorwin — and to Caspar, for the twin bowmen were always together and Gorwin spoke for both.

"We watch the seemings. See how something moves again in the trees — ?" He raised his bow and the nocked arrow flew, followed by Caspar's. The two dismounted, set off at a steady lope after the arrows; and presently brought them back, each stained with earth and moss alone.

"Seemings — unreal shapes," said Gorwin. "We cannot touch them with the swiftest arrows."

"And so they cannot touch us," said Hero. "A good thought."

Said Rhys with a smile, "You might have missed."

"No," Gorwin said simply.

Anvar, usually foremost in scoffing, was silent still.

They moved through the forest ways at a steady trot. Clearing after clearing went by, shadow after shadow flitted pointlessly before and after — and then, suddenly, they were confronted by strangers. Not men, but things seven feet or more in height, faces bestial and bearded, bodies mail-clad, cruelly horned at heel and elbow —

"Allow me," said Rhys with a kind of wild gaiety, "to introduce the great orcs of Greengorm Forest. I thought they kept further to the west."

"Silence, babbler," grated Anvar. "No time for foolery."

Not even time for speech, for the six startled orcs were suddenly charging towards them. There was time for Gorwin's bow to twang — leaving five — and Caspar's likewise — leaving four — and then there was time for nothing. The creatures' ferocity was incredible: Hero aimed blow after blow at one from horseback; Pursio slipped off his horse and tried to circle behind; a second orc had flung a great spear and almost in the same motion leapt on Lucas; Hero could see no more, for his life was imperilled. With fearful strength the orc had seized his leg in one clawed hand even as its club parried his sword; slowly he was being dragged from the saddle; he redoubled his blows, chipping and splintering the spiked club, but the orc held fast. Then he saw Pursio fall limply to the ground beneath another orcish club, and was inspired to frenzy. His free hand wrenched the reins and the horse reared high, its forehooves descending with shattering force upon the orc's helm and shoulder. The thing fell, brownish blood seeping into the fresh grass; at once Hero leapt to grapple with the orc standing over Pursio. This creature turned at once to defend itself and then seemed to stumble, falling with a cry to be impaled on Hero's blade; he saw from Pursio's wicked grin that his friend had not been unconscious, but had waited his moment to draw knife and hamstring the turning foe.

* * *

Lucas was dead, throttled; Damzik's thigh was spear-pierced; Anvar and Morgan had hacked the orc responsible to pieces while Gorwin's and Caspar's second shafts had met in the last one's heart. All this had taken but a few heartbeats, and already Pursio and Rhys were rifling the corpses. Tucked into an orcish belt they found a parchment which Madoc laboriously translated. *A party of ten . . . eight doughty warriors and two dwarves . . .* (Pursio and Damzik grimaced) *the leader a man of noble aspect . . .* (Hero thought of that sweet witch for a sudden guilty moment) *to be stopped at all costs . . .*

"Thus the lack of prudence on the part of these orcs," mused Hero. "It seems that dark designs are afoot and the Covens themselves fear us."

"Moreover," said Pursio, "it seems that we approach our goal." With sudden agility, he skipped to a nearby tree and shinned up the trunk. In a few minutes he had returned — "This path brings us to the Twins of Linsi, friends, less than a league hence."

"We cannot assail the Coven by mere force," said Hero. "But I have the ghost of an idea."

"Then out with it, friend, for assuredly it will need the aid of wiser counsels!" said Pursio.

Hero walked along the broadening path between the withered hills. He walked alone. The sword-hilt lay beneath his right hand, though he suspected it would see no use this day; his left arm hung stiff and painful. He strove to present the aspect of a Quest leader who, assailed by orcs and tormented by wandering visions of the woods, was now broken, spiritless, stripped of companions and of will . . .

In the tree-shadows, a wisp of white fog thickened and swelled. It became a hollow shell of humanity . . . a phantasm . . . a lady of moderate comeliness . . . and then, as though the sun rose, there broke forth the naked beauty of the witch who in the night had spellbound Hero and Anvar.

"My lady," said Hero in a dull voice. The witchery beat strongly at him, but he was held firm in reality by the cords bound by Pursio about his left arm, whose throbbing message of pain worked powerfully against the glamour.

"You have come to be with me," she said softly, the power pulsing from her in almost visible waves. Hero stared with yearning that was not wholly false, and was tormented to find that again the face of Allathea eluded him. "Leave that cruel sword," said the witchgirl, "you will not need it in the joyous life before you . . ."

(Men taken by the witches, Hero remembered grimly, are said to be lucky if they last a week. The unlucky ones last longer . . .)

He unbuckled the sword and let it fall. Together they walked on toward the Court of Mother Sulphur; all about, wisps of fog coalesced into curious, staring women, melted again into fog. The Court was but another open space, yet one which crackled with unseen power. Here an old crone dangled a rat as though it were a talisman (as perchance it was); here younglings danced in some naked ritual; at the centre of all stood Mother Sulphur, a harsh-faced, buxom matron whose hair ran wildly in the waves of smoky, lurid yellow signifying her name.

"You have him then, Dyanna — I thought him stronger. Bring him to me."

The young witch obeyed, but said urgently, "He is mine."

"All is mine in these woods, daughter. Begone."

Hero was left before this horrid woman, all others maintaining an awed distance. "Caught you easily enough, did she not?" said Mother Sulphur with her head coquettishly tilted. "But I think I'll take you for my own." And Hero saw with horror that this creature was becoming infinitely desirable, radiant, irresistible . . . He moved forward, enraptured, and the painful cords reminded him of grim reality. He moved on — grappled her and spun her round — whipped the concealed knife from his boot and touched it to her fleshy throat. "The Swan Bones," he said grimly.

"Take flight, o Mother, and we shall have him!" came a cry.

"Fools!" she gasped. "Cold iron is at my throat, cold iron holds me in the body." Her hand fumbled in her bodice. " — Here are the Swan Bones, impertinent wretch."

Hero snatched the pouch with his stiff left arm, and felt it. "Very well. But first you swear that I and my party go unmolested — "

"I swear!" The knife was pressing close.

"By the Oath of the Astral League — " This, Madoc had recalled, was the single binding oath of witches and sorcerers.

"A pox — Yes. Yes, I swear by the Oath of the League that your party may go unharmed by my folk." Suddenly she smiled. "You are a bold popinjay and I would I'd taken you after all. I know your quest (what seer does not?) — take this advice: the northeast trail once more until it forks in three, and there go right. So much aid you deserve."

Hero released her, and almost to his surprise was not struck dead; held by the Oath, the Mother and all her brood faded into insubstantial smoke.

* * *

He returned to the party's congratulations and told the tale; with many a jest they set off along the appointed path through the now less ominous woods. Only long afterward was Hero to recall that of Mother Sulphur's sayings, her advice most specially was not given under the Oath of the Astral League.

To be continued . . .

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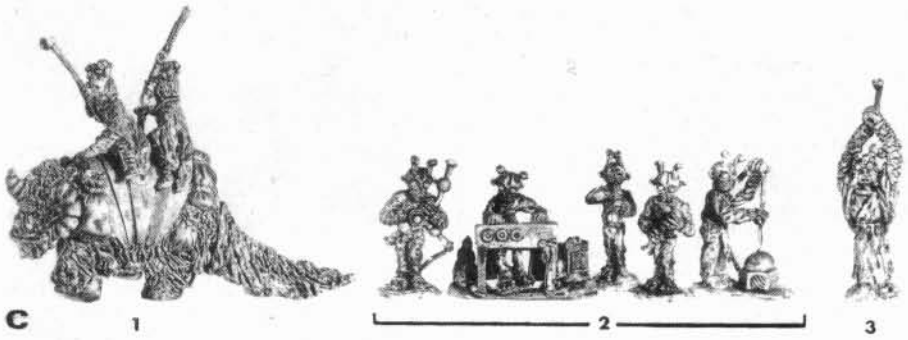

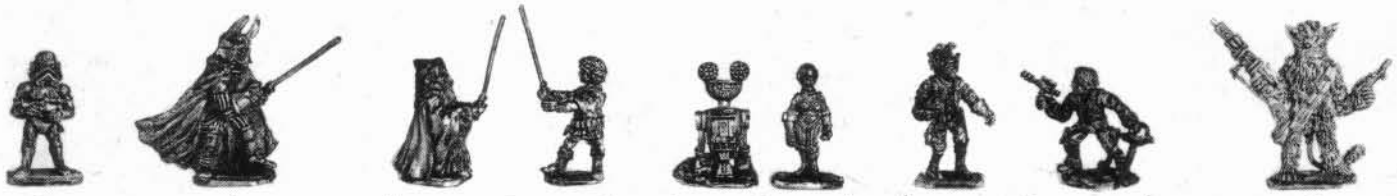

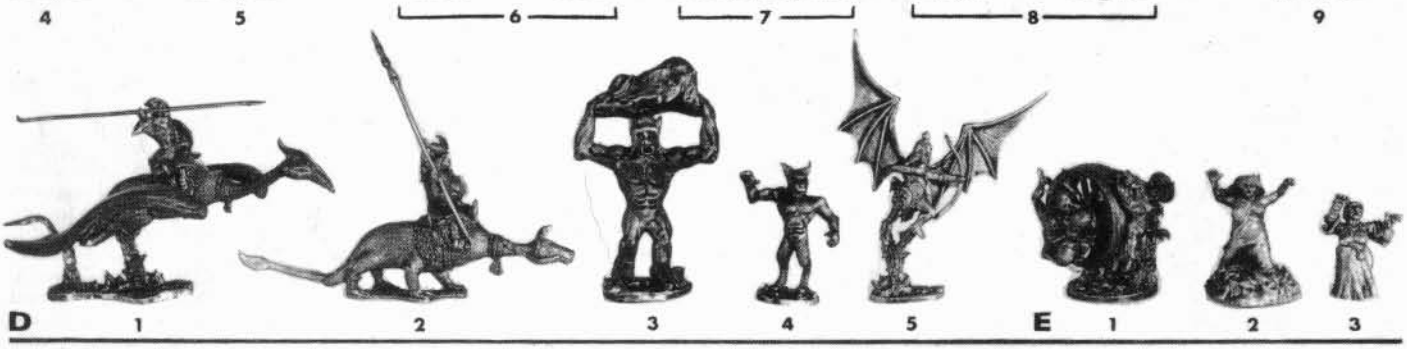

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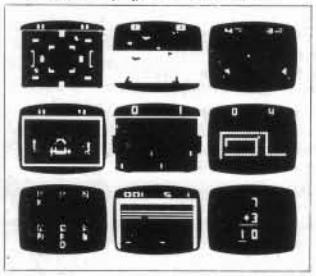

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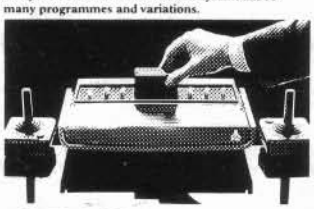

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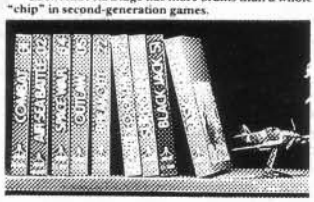

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